

Sunday April 14th 2013
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Eighty

1). Heb 13:7 *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. 9 Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. 10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.*

a). We had I hope been encouraged last week to see that not only has the Lord provided those who rule, who lead within the 'Church', and those who teach the word of God within the same setting, but that He had also given these individuals to be examples of how to have faith to the saving of the soul despite the constraints of a sin nature and the fallen world in which we live.

b). How encouraging it is that we do not have to wonder, 'How do I do this?', but rather we have those to whom we can look to see how it can be done. We have the word and we have a living example of the word in action. This is truly a great blessing.

c). Php 3:17 ¶ *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.*

d). Not only has the Lord given those who provide the pattern to imitate, but we have also had firsthand experience of witnessing the lives of those who walk, but who are the enemies of the cross of Christ – those who have been occupied with various and strange doctrines.

e). We have then the real and we have seen the counterfeit and the more we closely observe the real the more easily we would see the counterfeit should it appear amongst us again.

f). As we saw in v8 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever' – that which God has said to us with respect to receiving our inheritance in the coming Kingdom of Christ has never changed from the Garden of Eden onwards – here are just a few examples - Ge 5:24 *And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*

g). Ge 22:18 *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

h). Ex 19:5 *'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

i). 1Sa 15:22 *Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.*

j). 1Pe 1:13 ¶ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;*

k). Therefore we have a consistent benchmark against which we can measure the manner of living of those who are our examples and therefore a double surety, the word and the example, against which to measure the progress of our own lives.

l). And this consistent benchmark is the mark against which all doctrine, all teaching is to be measured also – all should have the same focus that God has, and if it doesn't it will probably fall into the category of the various and strange doctrines of v9 – within the context of teaching though let's remember - that which we are taught we receive, from above, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit by the grace of God.

m). But, let's also remember that there is that which can be received through the ministry of the demonic world through the doctrines of demons; again then, keeping ourselves properly grounded in the word of God after the fashion that scripture instructs us to do it – line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, comparing spiritual with spiritual – is of importance beyond measure.

2). We had also seen last week the contrast between the altar of Christ which is inseparably connected to faith and the ministry of the tabernacle that is inseparably connected to 'fleshly ordinances' – a contrast between the inner working of the Spirit in our lives and the outward appearance of righteousness through our own efforts by keeping rules and regulations and rituals.

a). Those who pursue an outward appearance of righteousness, who in effect are living in unbelief have no right to eat at the altar of Christ - *10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.*

b). It is faith alone which establishes us within the altar of Christ.

c). Now on an historical level it would be an obvious truth that those Jews who were still pursuing the Judaic sacrificial system under the law had no right to eat from the altar of Christ as this was available for those who had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ only.

d). And it is from this imagery of the sacrificial feasts that v10-13 also draws additional truth.

e). Within the tabernacle/temple ministry sacrificial feasts were an integral part of the worship – sacrifices were made and those on behalf of whom the sacrifices were made got to eat of the sacrificial animals.

f). There was however one feast at which this never happened and this was the Day of Atonement.

g). It is the Day of Atonement that we have seen referenced in Hebrews Chapter 9 - *Heb 9:7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; 8 ¶ the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience--*

And it is the Day of Atonement that we find again here in Chapter 13 – *Heb 13:11 For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.*

h). It is the blood of these animals only that was taken by the high priest once a year into the 'Holiest of All' to atone for the people's sin, while the bodies of the slain animals were 'burned outside the camp' – and all of this was, according to the scripture, 'symbolic for the present time' – a shadow and a type.

i). The Day of Atonement is the 6th of the 7 feasts given to the nation of Israel and as such comes immediately before the Feast of Tabernacles, pointing

to the future Day of Israel's restoration before returning to dwell in the land with God in their midst - Le 23:27 *"Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.*

j). And of course this future Day of Atonement is based upon the sacrifice of Christ, past, and His King/Priestly ministry, future, of which all previous Days of Atonement were just pictures - Heb 9:11 *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

k). Just as the animals were slain and burned outside the camp of Israel, so was Christ slain outside of the city of Jerusalem in fulfillment of the type - Heb 13:12 *Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.*

l). And again within an historical setting it would only be by accepting Christ as this sacrifice that any Jew could receive eternal redemption and have hope of the Kingdom - Heb 13:13 *Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.*

m). Now, perhaps we should note once again that the Day of Atonement is the 6th of the 7 feasts and therefore does not deal with issues of eternal salvation, for that we would find in the 1st feast, Passover, but rather it deals with issues beyond Passover - after all in our verse from Leviticus 23 we see the clear connection between Atonement and the soul. And although the fulfillment of the 7 feasts for Israel in that future Day will happen quite rapidly this distinction between Passover and Atonement needs to be noted.

3). For ourselves in this the Day of Atonement would speak to the process of the salvation of the soul as our confessed sin is forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Christ upon the Mercy Seat in the Heavenly Tabernacle through His present High Priestly ministry, which is just what we see in - 1Jo 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive*

ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

a). 'Atonement' then is not for us a onetime event as it will be yet future for Israel, but an ongoing process, but a process nonetheless that we must of necessity participate in if we are to enter into the Millennial Kingdom of Christ as pictured in the feast of Tabernacles – a process that has its point of completion at the Judgment Seat, when the salvation of our souls may be realized.

b). And as we participate in this process so must we also bear the reproach of Christ, we will be reviled, persecuted and rejected just as He was
2Ti 3:12 *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

And just as Jesus suffered reproach from those of His own nation so will we primarily suffer reviling, persecution and rejection from other Christians – all this we know.

4). *14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.*

For the Jewish people it is the city of Jerusalem to which they look and for which they long – this is for them the Holy City, the city of David the king. But this city in its entire ancient splendor will be utterly destroyed during the Tribulation -
Mt 24:1 ¶ *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."*

To be replaced by a rebuilt city and a rebuilt Temple during the Millennium.

a). For us during this present time we have no continuing city – the present Jerusalem is not ours being a construction of pictures and shadows of that which is to come, nor will it itself remain; in fact there is no city anywhere on the earth that is ours that we should look to as all cities are within the kingdom of the god of this age.

b). Instead we are seeking the city that is to come, the same city Abraham was waiting for - Heb 11:9 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

c). We are seeking the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly city in which we have our citizenship, that shall be our home during the time of the Kingdom as long as we participate in the process pictured through the 'Day of Atonement'.

5). Heb 13:15 *Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

a). Therefore because Christ is our Passover Lamb and our High Priest, because His blood has been shed for us, because we are promised a Heavenly city and a position of rulership as a joint heir with the King of kings and Lord of lords we are to continually offer, not animal sacrifices, but the sacrifice of praise.

b). The phrase 'the sacrifice of praise' comes from the Book of Jeremiah and is found in the context of the Millennial Kingdom with regards to a restored Israel – Jer 33:10 ¶ *"Thus says the LORD: 'Again there shall be heard in this place of which you say, "It is desolate, without man and without beast" -in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, 11 'the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: "Praise the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His mercy endures forever" - and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD.*

c). And the sacrifice of praise which we are to offer is with this same end in view as we look to and wait for the Kingdom which is to come.

d). We will also notice from the Hebrews verse that the sacrifice of praise is described as 'the fruit of our lips' – a part of producing fruit for the Kingdom then can be directly attributed to what comes out of our mouth.

e). As we progress in the process to spiritual maturity, as the metamorphosis takes place in us through the implantation of the word, just as brotherly love will grow and our marriages grow, so there should be a corresponding, growing harvest of the fruit of our lips.

f). Let's remember that the scriptures tell us - Mt 12:34 *"Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.***

g). Our hearts we will remember are to be established by grace and out of the abundance of grace in our hearts our mouths are to speak, and the essential element of praise that we see in Hebrews 13:15 is 'giving thanks to His name' – the word translated 'giving' literally meaning 'confessing' and we might

remember that according to Hebrews Chapter 3, Jesus is the 'High Priest of our confession'.

h). And these verses concerning the sacrifice of praise would find parallel scriptures in - Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 ¶ submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. 18 ¶ Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

i). Within these verses from Ephesians and Colossians we see praise and thanksgiving within a corporate setting, but they would be by no means limited to this – in fact a good part of our daily communication with the Lord should be the sacrifice of praise, giving thanks to His name – and these are the fruit of our lips, words that come from the inside, from the grace that is in our hearts, to the outside. We aren't then talking about silence here - Ps 63:2 *So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. 3 ¶ Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. 4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.*

j). Now according to our original verse from Hebrews the sacrifice of praise is not the only sacrifice with which God is well pleased, but it is one of the sacrifices which is well pleasing to Him. So if the sacrifice of praise, the giving/confession of thanks to His name is well pleasing to God, it must fit within the context of that which we saw in - Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

This means then that the sacrifice of praise is given by faith and is therefore part of the process to and a demonstration of having faith to the saving of the soul – it is a work of gold, silver and precious stones; making our wedding garment.

k). This is why the sacrifice of praise is described as the fruit of our lips – fruit is produced through faith in action as a result of dying to self – And so, because we have believed that which God has said regarding the offering of this

sacrifice, praise and giving thanks to His name should become for us something that we choose to do; choosing not to do so says that we have not believed that which God has said about this sacrifice and therefore puts us in unbelief.

l). So, can we get by without offering the sacrifice of praise? Does it really matter? Well what does the scripture say? - Jas 4:17 *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

m). Now, as we said a moment ago, the sacrifice of praise is not the only sacrifice with which God is well pleased - 16 *But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

n). Historically, this would be another reference to taking care of those who had lost all they had through suffering persecution and would continue the idea of 'entertaining strangers' from Hebrews 13:2.

o). And for ourselves the implication of this would be fairly obvious being put succinctly for us in -Jas 2:15 *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*

p). And again this is a sacrifice accomplished and put into practice through having faith to the saving of the soul.

6). In the verses we looked at from Ephesians Chapter 5 and Colossians Chapter 3 we can see that the admonition to praise through being filled with the Spirit is then followed by the admonition, by the same means, to submit and this same sequence is seen here in Hebrews Chapter 13 - Heb 13:17 *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

a). This verse then takes us back to the same group of people that we had seen in - V7 *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*

b). Before we continue though let's say something briefly about the word 'rule' - literally this word means, 'to lead with authority' and the authority does not come from Man, but from God - Ac 20:28 *"Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which **the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.***

And it certainly has nothing to do with 'lording it over' anyone, but has much more to do with safety and protection for those who find themselves in the place of faithful obedience.

c). Now as soon as those whom the Holy Spirit appoints become 'overseers', they, just like the husband in the marriage relationship, automatically have the lead by the nature of their role. It is not a case of if they want to or not, they are from that point onwards leading – the only question that remains from that point on is whether they are leading well or not, and the determination of the quality of their leadership can only be made through the word of God – It will be God alone who makes this judgment. For those who do lead well however the scripture is very encouraging - 1Ti 5:17 ¶ *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.*

d). And this should have a present application and most assuredly a future fulfillment.

e). And it is to these that God has appointed that obedience and submission are due. The word translated 'submission' is derived from the same word as that used for wives, 'wives submit to your own husbands...' and literally means 'to yield under'.

f). And immediately here we will realize that obedience and submission within this context are a matter of having faith to the saving of the soul as a result of being filled with the Spirit – our trust then is not in the person who leads per se, whom God has appointed, but in God who has made the appointment.

g). However it would be good to remember that it is this verse in Hebrews Chapter 13 that has proved to be a stumbling block for many who were of our acquaintance, who you will no doubt readily call to mind, because for them personal agenda proved to be more compelling than the truth of scripture.

h). Well, it is my prayer that this verse will not cause any of us to stumble, and I am sure that as we go into it in some detail, so as to fully understand it, it will not be an issue.

i). But that detail will have to wait until next time – if the Lord is willing.