

Look to HIM Who Suffered that We Might Have Eternal Life

Hebrews 13:19-14

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND BIBLICAL CONTEXT

A. Historical Background

In Exodus, it is recorded in glorious and vivid details *how* God brought out the Israelites out of Egypt with His Mighty Power filled with numerous Miraculous Signs and Wonders according to His Promises given to Abraham and Sarah. Within that divinely recorded history of the Israelites, we see how God continued to *unfold His Plan of Salvation* which *extended to* and *culminated* in the manifestation of Jesus Christ and His Ministry on Earth. During the time it took for the Israelites to travel between Egypt and the Promise Land (Canaan), God *instituted* the **Divine Law** the purpose of which was to *transform* the **spiritual, socio-economic** and **political** life of the Israelites. *It was crucial for the Israelites to let go all that they have learned in Egypt and incorporated into their culture which included idol worship, loss of identity and inferiority as a result of being enslaved by the Egyptians.* **Recall that the Israelites lived in Egypt for 430 years** (Exodus 12:40-42). That means **4 generations** of the Israelites were born in Egypt! However, **the remnants** have kept their **faith traditions** of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Leah and Rachel and how God elevated Joseph in Egypt to save his family which were *passed on to them*. **But after 430 years, the Israelites had too much of Egypt in them!** So, God manifested Himself gloriously and performed numerous miracles in the process of liberating the Israelites out of Egypt! In unfolding His Plan of Salvation, God also began *instituting* **spiritually significant** events such as **the Passover**, *introduced New Calendar*, etc. (Exodus chapters 12 and 13) to mark their New Identity. **But the Israelites kept on looking back toward Egypt while God was leading them into their future – to freedom, ownership of lands, prosperity and nationhood! Their unfaithfulness and disobedience caused them not to enter the Promise Land! They kept looking back toward Egypt instead of fixing their eyes on God who saved them!**

B. Biblical Context

In the **Divine Law** God *instituted* in the people of Israel, the *most significant part* was **spiritual in nature**. It *involved* the **Tabernacle** in which the **Ark of the Covenant** was kept, the **Priesthood**, the **various animal sacrifices** required for the **Atonement of Sins** (intentional and unintentional sins) and the **Fellowship Offerings** to maintain their relationship with God under **the Covenant**. We cannot cover the **extensive spiritual and eternal**

significance represented in the above highlighted areas today since we need 3 to 5 years of deep study of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy! In brief summary I would point out that they essentially cover the following:

- a) **The Tabernacle** (later the Jerusalem Temple): representing the Holy Place wherein the **Presence of God** *resides* among His people. For the Holy and Righteous God to maintain His Presence in The Tabernacle, the people of God had to maintain spiritual purity.
- b) **The Priesthood** (foreshadowing Jesus Christ in the future): God chosen and appointed **Person/Position** who stands between God and the people *offering* intercessory prayer, **sacrifices for the Atonement of Sins** (both for himself and the people), various offerings as required by the Law (which only Jesus Christ qualifies for such roles since He is the Only One without Sin).
- c) **The Fellowship Under the Covenant.** Regular Praise, Worship and Service as **Acts of Faith**, *Obedience* and **Witness** which *distinguished* the Israelites from other idol worshipping nations.

Note: In Hebrews 13, **verses 10 to 13** make reference to “altar,” “tabernacle,” “the High Priest,” “blood of animals,” “Most Holy Place,” and the bodies of sacrificed animals “**burned outside of the camp**” **the spiritual and eternal significance** of which are thoroughly and succinctly explained in **Exodus** 29:1-14; **Leviticus** chapters 4:1-21; 6:1-11; 16:1-27 and **Numbers** 19:1-9. What we must pay careful attention to are (a) the particular animals chosen for such sacrifices, “a young bull” and “2 rams” (b) both **without defect** (c) for the **atonement of sins** committed by the High Priest and the people and (d) parts of the animals must be burned “**outside of the camp.**” *All of these things point to Jesus Christ who must fulfill what they foretell and symbolize!*

II. THE LESSON: Look to Him Who Suffered that We Might Have Eternal Life

1. v. 9. Gravitate toward Grace, Not to Things that Appeal to the Flesh!

Hebrews chapter 12 *urges* the believers to “**throw off** everything that hinders and **the sin** that so easily entangles” as we run **the faith race** to the finish line. It admonishes us to “run with **perseverance** the race **marked out** for us.” The whole Bible has laid out God’s Plan of Salvation in Jesus Christ who came to *demonstrate* for us the **Pattern of Faithfulness, Obedience and Service** even onto Death! *Our Savior has already “marked out” the path we must follow which leads us to Eternal Life.* In verse 2, the Bible commands us to “**fix our eyes on Jesus**, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him **endured the Cross**, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Before we get to the Exhortations and Benediction at the end of Hebrews 13, the Bible strongly urges us to:

- “Endure hardship as discipline” because God is treating us as His children – legitimate children (verses 7-11);
- “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; [because] without holiness no one will see the Lord” (verse 14);
- “... not to *refuse* **Him** who speaks; ... If we turn away from **Him** who warns us from heaven, ... [when God] “shakes the earth and also the heavens, “ those of us put our hope in Christ shall “remain” in Him!

When God shakes the heavens and the earth at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, those of us who *persevered in the faith* **will not be shaken loose** from Him! **Not to be shaken loose from Him, we must fix our gaze on Christ!**

For the Jews who became Christians back in the day, the challenge was that many of the Pharisees continued to spread **false teachings** which emphasized the **old Jewish traditions** such as the Passover, sacrificing animals and tithes all of which involved eating “ceremonial food.” The problem with such “**strange teachings**” was that *Jesus had done away* with all of that **the Law required** when He *established* the **New Covenant in His Blood!** Therefore, the writer of Hebrews (Apostle Paul) strongly *warned* the Jews who were sliding back saying the old tradition of “ceremonial foods” were of no value when it comes to their Salvation! Instead, he *urged* them to be “strengthened by Grace” focusing on Jesus Christ who offered Himself as The Ultimate Passover Lamb (without defect) to be sacrificed on the Cross!

In this world, we too will continue to be confronted by “**all kinds of strange teachings**” which are intended to **seduce us away from Grace** so that we **focus on the desires of our flesh!** The devil knows that as long as he can succeed in tempting us with *things that appeal to our flesh*, he can draw us away from the Sanctuary! The longer the devil can keep us away from the church, the more attached we will be to things that appeal to our flesh! *The further away we are from the Word of God, it becomes easier to be “carried away by all kinds of strange teachings!”* Focusing on the things of the flesh will only cause us to stumble and fall! **Therefore, we must gravitate toward the Grace of God which made it possible for us to be saved in the Lamb of God!**

2. vv. 10-11. The Altar from which We Minister is Sanctified by the Blood of The Lamb

Verse 10 was the hardest to understand until you go back and carefully read the Scriptures referred to above **in the Note.** The “**bull and rams without defect**” which were **sacrificed** for **the Atonement of Sins** *become sacred* since **God ordained it** and accepted the entire process of **sanctification** *as Holy acceptable to Him.* The Blood of the sacrificed

animals and certain body parts were *designated* as Holy. The Priest was required to **sprinkle the altar and various articles** in the **Sanctuary** with the **Blood** for purification and sanctification purpose. Also, the Priest was required to have certain parts of the “bull and rams,” whose **blood** was brought into the Most Holy Place, – “**their hides, flesh and offal must be taken outside of the camp to be burned up**” (Leviticus 16:27-28). This **divinely ordained sacrificial system and God’s Holy Presence** make the Priest, the Altar, the Sanctuary and the people, who by faith partake in it, Holy. Of course, all of this **Divinely Ordained Sacrificial System** given by God in **the Law** as thoroughly detailed with succinct instructions to be followed carefully by the **Priest** pointed to what must be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

3. vv. 12-14. Look to Him Who Suffered that We Might Have Eternal Life!

The Hebrews who converted to Christianity in Paul’s time were not only *persecuted* by the Romans but also by the Jews who were bombarding them with “**strange teachings**” which were *designed to weaken their faith!* Apostle Paul had to counter such false teachings by reminding the Hebrews to focus on God who Redeemed them in the Blood of Christ! Instead of being destructured by **false teachings** which can only cause them to **look back** as their ancestors did who died in the desert, Apostle Paul urged them **to look to Him** *who suffered* for their Salvation!

Christ Suffered Outside the City Gate to Make Us Holy.

The Jewish priests, Pharisees and Sadducees who wanted *to maintain their privileged status had* to insist the Jews **go back to the old traditions** because they depended on the tithe, animals and the money exchanges which took place at the Jerusalem Temple. But Jesus did away with the Priesthood, animal sacrifices, etc. required in the Old Testament! The Jewish authorities crucified Jesus outside of the City Gate like a criminal! ***In so doing, they only succeeded in fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament!*** God did it that way so that through His Suffering **outside the City of Jerusalem**, *anyone* who believed in Jesus Christ can receive Salvation **outside of the old Jewish religious traditions!** Understand the **New Testament Church** was established by the Blood of Jesus Christ who was crucified “outside of the camp” like a common criminal! Therefore, Apostle Paul urged the Hebrews in verse 13 “... to go to Him **outside of the camp**, bearing His disgrace He bore.”

III. CONCLUSION

The Holy City that Endures is Found in Heaven Not Here!

All of those who believe in Jesus Christ ultimately go to Him where He rules from Heaven, not from Jerusalem in the Middle East! Therefore, look to Him Who Suffered that You Might Have Eternal Life!