

### **THE SANCTIFYING BLOOD OF JESUS (HEBREWS 13)**

The book of Hebrews was written to the Hebrews, those of the Jewish faith, who had then believed on Jesus as being the Christ, the Son of God, and were then to be living their lives accordingly, to their faith in Christ Jesus, just as it is with us, to which the author(s) of Hebrews is encouraging and exhorting (that is, strongly encouraging) them to hang on to that faith in Christ, which then means, not just in their minds, but in all that they (and now us) say and do. It can be said, and has been, that the theme of the book of Hebrews is in **Hebrews 3:6**, where it speaks of Christ Jesus being over the house of God, of which they (we) belong "IF we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end." What accompanies that theme of holding firm to our faith to the end, is what **Hebrews 6:1** tells us, "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ [Jesus died for our sins, taking our sins and punishment upon Himself, to the cross and the grave, yet He rose from the grave on the third day, conquering death, sin and evil, making a way for us too, to overcome and have eternal life in Christ. And then, as one believes on and receives Christ Jesus, to be "born-again" as Jesus said we must be, we then are in a covenant relationship with God through Christ Jesus, to live according to His will and purpose, not our own.] let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God..." Dead works. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." (**Psalms 127:1**) Likewise, Jesus said, "**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.**" (**John 15:5**) That going on to perfection is then through the sanctifying blood of Jesus, as we are set apart from the world in His Holiness and we are justified before God in His Righteousness.

Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul uses in his letters the analogy of (him/us) running in a race. The author of Hebrews does as well. (**Acts 20:24, 1 Corinthians 9:24, 2 Timothy 4:7**) In **1 Corinthians 9:24-25** Paul asks, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. [Sounds like we have a responsibility in that, don't we? Also, making sure that you do indeed get that prize.] And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now **they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.**" Obviously more than one person will receive "THE PRIZE", eternal life in Christ Jesus, being joint-heirs with Jesus, etc, an "imperishable crown" but his point is clearly that not everyone who seems to be running the race of the Christian faith will receive "THE PRIZE". One may scoff and say, "I'm just putting my trust in Jesus." Sounds good, praise the Lord. But, it wasn't just Paul that had that message. The Apostle Peter said to "make your call and election sure." (**2 Peter 1:10**) In other words, we have a responsibility to make sure that we are right

with God through Christ. It wasn't just the apostles who were saying that, as if they wavered in their faith from time to time. Someone asked Jesus, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, "**Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,'**" (Luke 13:23-25)

So Paul said, "everyone who **competes** is temperate in all things." That word "competes" is actually the Greek word "agonizomai" (ag-ONEE-zoh-my), of which we can see the english word "agonize". It means "strive, to struggle, to fight, to labor fervently."<sup>1</sup> Guess what? That is the same word Jesus used in saying, "**Strive to enter through the narrow gate.**" "Everyone who "strives, struggles, fights, labors fervently", is to be temperate in all things. That word "temperate" is the Greek word "egkrateuomai" (eng-kra-TEU-o-mai). It means to exercise self-control! What do we know about self-control? It is part of the fruit of the Spirit of Christ! "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) The fulfillment of operating in the "fruit of the Spirit" accomplishes for us and others, what Jesus said was the Great Commandments of God: to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind and to love others as ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31)

Paul never contends in his letters that we are saved by our works. As he said to the Colossians, "To this end I also labor, striving [agonizomai] according to His working which works in me mightily." (Colossians 1:29) We aren't just idly sitting and waiting for God to eventually work in us mightily. We begin to walk in the faith we have in Christ by being obedient to His will. Paul's explains to us in Romans 8:1, that, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." We are indeed saved through Christ alone, just as Jesus said in John 14:6, "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.**" But as we are "running the race" we are doing that by living according to His Way, Truth, and Life, while bearing the fruit of His Spirit.

We have recently looked at Hebrews 12, that starts off by saying, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, [of which they are referring to the many of the Old Testament men and women of faith that are mentioned in Hebrews 11] let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the**

---

1 <https://biblehub.com/greek/75.htm>

joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." The Apostle Peter elaborates on that in his 1<sup>st</sup> epistle saying, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should **follow His steps**: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, **when He was reviled** [To assail with scornful or abusive language<sup>2</sup>], **did not revile in return**; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might **live for righteousness** [bearing fruit of the Spirit]—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." (1 Peter 2:21-25)

The Apostle Paul said the same thing in his epic **Romans 8**, saying that we are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be glorified together" (**Romans 8:17**). Also as the Apostle Paul told Timothy (and us) "if we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (**2 Timothy 2:12**), from the present to an endless future, for all of eternity. God indeed is reigning in His sovereignty even now. Yet for the present, we are warned, "Be sober, be vigilant [gregoreo: watchful, alert]; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (**1 Peter 5:8**) Jesus spoke on that by saying, "I am the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. [likewise we are running the race with and in Him] The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep." (**John 10:9-11**) That suffering and enduring that is expected of us is not speaking of the sin and its consequences that we bring on ourselves. We are, after all, in the words of the Apostle Peter, being called out of the darkness (of living in and according to sins against God) and into His marvelous light (living in and according to His Righteousness and Holiness, as we are going on to "perfection" in Christ!). Yet "...the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (**2 Timothy 2:19**) Jesus said as much, after He had said "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (**John 3:3**) He followed that up with "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (**John 3:5-6**), He then explained "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him **should not** perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him **might be saved**. He

---

2 <https://www.wordnik.com/words/revile>

who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, **that they have been done in God.**" (John 3:16-21)

=====

### Hebrews 13

#### Concluding With Moral Directions

Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them –those who are mistreated–since you yourselves are in the body also.

[prisoners: desmios-one who is bound (In the New Testament, it is often used to describe individuals who are physically imprisoned, but it can also carry a metaphorical sense of being spiritually or morally bound.<sup>3</sup> While the writer(s) of Hebrews may not be speaking on those who willingly continue to live in sin, it is upon each of us, as God's children, to be praying for deliverance for others in a way in which we would pray even for ourselves (love your neighbor as yourself). It is a burden that we carry in our hearts, and we have to take that burden to Jesus. We cannot save, deliver or heal anyone-but Jesus can! As He said, **"a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son [of God] makes you free, you shall be free indeed."** (John 8:35-36)]

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. [Fornicators: pornos-"refers to a person who engages in sexual immorality, particularly outside the bounds of marriage. It is often used to describe those who indulge in illicit sexual practices, including fornication, adultery, and other forms of sexual sin. The term underscores a lifestyle or habitual practice rather than a single act."<sup>4</sup> It can be also understood, just by the mere Greek word " pornos" what that can also include.] Let your conduct be without covetousness [wanting something that doesn't belong to us but belongs to someone else; be content with such things as you have.

[Once again, it is the enemy of our souls that mainly works through unbelievers and false/fallen brothers or sisters in Christ, to **"steal, kill, and destroy"**. As Jesus spoke of God meeting our basic essential needs such as food and clothing He said, **"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall**

---

3 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1198.htm>

4 <https://biblehub.com/greek/4205.htm>

be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) Beyond that we ask, and if it is His will, we receive. We are promised that in Christ we will though have "life abundant" in Him!]

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

### **Concluding Religious Directions**

Remember those who rule over you [hegeomai: "to lead, to consider, to regard"-meaning one who is leading by example and is considering and regarding others], who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.

[Ultimately Christ Jesus has and is leading us by His example, and then also the apostles, as we can read their instruction to us that was given to them from Christ Jesus. And then we pass that good news on to others. That reminded me then of Jesus' "Beatitudes", which means "supreme blessedness", being blessed by God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit [humility and contrition-knowing we are all sinners being saved by the grace of God], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted [that goes for sighing and being grieved]. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3-10)]

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. 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.

[In other words, we are not saved through religious rituals nor by what is called asceticism, the denying of one's self food or marriage, etc. That can be explained by **Ephesians 2:8-10**. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works [not what we eat or don't eat], lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (The fruit of the Spirit, the Great Commandment of God's and the second like it, and the Great Commission.)]

We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with

His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. 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. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

[Jesus, in **Revelation 22:12-15**, says this, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie." Although we are presently "outside of the gate" with Christ Jesus, so to speak, **Hebrews 4:16** tells us, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." That is, for ourselves, and as we are presently outside of His gates, we are sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus. And as love hopes all things and believes all things—we are hoping and believing, going to His throne of grace, praying that others will turn to Jesus in repentance for the forgiveness of their sins to become a new creation in Christ Jesus.]

Obey those who rule over you [Principally it is the Word of God that we are obeying, but it is the same word hegeomai: "one who is leading by example and is considering and regarding others. We should all be that example to others.], 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. **Pray for us**; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

#### **Benediction (FOR US AS WELL!)**

Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through **the blood of the everlasting covenant** [the sanctifying blood of Jesus], **make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly. Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with you all. Amen.