

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

by

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CHAPTER TWELVE

“WITHIN THE VEIL . . . WITHOUT THE CAMP”

Hebrews 13:1-25

The closing chapter of this epistle called the early Hebrew Christians to complete separation from Judaism. Although their Christ-rejecting nation was still continuing the outward ceremonies of the Levitical order, those who loved the Lord Jesus were exhorted to **“go forth . . . unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach”** (v. 13). By faith in His one sufficient sacrifice, they had a **“hope . . . an anchor of the soul . . . within the veil,”** even in heaven itself (6:19, 20). With their eyes fixed upon their Forerunner and Great High Priest, they were to press on in the Christian race, whatever the cost!

“Within the veil . . . without the camp”—this should be the abiding experience of every blood-bought child of God. To the Jewish believer it means that the veil of the Temple has been rent in twain, forever setting aside the Levitical order, forever opening **“the way into the holiest of all.”**

To Jew or Gentile in Christ it means that he is seated with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 1:3), that he has immediate and constant access to the throne of grace for every time of need. And to Jew or Gentile it sounds the call to complete separation from the God-dishonoring, Christ-rejecting, Spirit-resisting world system.

It is God’s call to us today, beseeching us to reflect the glory of the risen Lord in a world of sin, that lost souls may behold, by faith, the Christ whose personal, moral and official glories shine from the pages of this inspired epistle.

With such an incentive, with Christ as our Goal, with heaven as our eternal home, we should **“count it all joy”** when we suffer affliction on our earthly pilgrimage for His name’s sake (See James 1:1-12; cf. Hebrews 12:11; Romans 5:3-5; 8:18; II Corinthians 4:17, 18; I Peter 4:12, 13).

Hebrews 12 closes with the forceful appeal to the persecuted Jewish Christians for patient endurance and thankful service to God, in view of their part in the eternal, imperishable kingdom that cannot be shaken in that yet future day of judgment upon the ungodly. Chapter 13 enlarges upon the characteristics of this immovable kingdom.

Six Features of the Kingdom Which Cannot Be Moved 13:1-6

The final statement in chapter 12 refers to our God as a consuming fire. Now in 13:1-6 we have the things which the holy fire of the divine abhorrence of evil will not consume. They are six in number:

1. *Brotherly love* (v. 1)

“Let brotherly love continue” (v. 1).

Do not let the heaven-kindled fire on the altar of your hearts go down. **“Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another”** (I Thessalonians 4:9), because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart of a true believer by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5); so that there is an upflow and there is an outflow of that love—up to God, its source, and out to His children.

2. *Generosity* (v. 2)

It may be that the brother is a stranger. We are not, therefore, to exclude him from our hospitality. Perhaps angels will thus be entertained, as Abraham, Gideon and Manoah found (Genesis 18; Judges 6:11-24; 13:2-23). But we may always be sure that, when the children of God are welcomed into a house, their invisible angel-attendants enter too.

3. *Sympathy* (v. 3)

We are to feel that the bonds which bind our brothers who are suffering for their testimony to Christ are our bonds. Are we not members one of another? We suffer in our brethren and with them. Are they being led as sheep to the slaughter? We, says the apostle in Romans 8:36, are thus being dealt with.

These are the sufferings often attached to the believer’s testimony in a hostile world. But there are also adversities common to all; that are **“in the body.”** As we are still thus confined in the limitation of our clay tabernacle, we are to feel sympathy with others equally exercised, groaning in our mortal bodies with a groaning and still unredeemed creation (Romans 8:18-25).

4. *Chastity* (v. 4)

Stern is the denunciation of any infraction of the laws of purity, whether in or outside wedlock. God will surely judge it. Impurity brings a film over the inner eye, and deteriorates those who are guilty of it. Besides, there is the awful prospect of meeting the divine anger in the life to come.

5. *Contentment* (v. 5)

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Cf. Psalm 118:6).

The exhortation to be content with such things as we have is much needed in our time. We are tempted to be like the world, never satisfied, but continually clamoring for more. The great **“I will never leave thee”** promise, first uttered to Jacob at Bethel (Genesis 28:15), is repeated here for the comfort of the one who finds God to be enough for him. The pilgrim of faith will never be forsaken! These words have been paraphrased, **“I will never let go thy hand, nor fail to provide for thee.”** (Cf. Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:9).

6. Fearlessness (v. 6)

The divine presence makes us bold. **“We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper . . . I will not fear.”** David said, **“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee”** (Psalm 56:3). That is good. But Isaiah said, **“I will trust, and not be afraid”** (Isaiah 12:2). That is better still! Why should we travel to heaven third class, when we might travel first?

These six features belong to the kingdom which cannot be shaken.

Our Attitude Toward Spiritual Guides

13:7, 17

In verses 7 and 17 we have exhortations bearing on our attitude toward spiritual guides. Those who have finished their course are to be remembered (v. 7). The example of their faith and the truth they ministered must not be forgotten. Those who are over us in the Lord now are to be submitted unto (v. 17); for they watch for our souls, **“as they that give account.”** If they are true undershepherds, they want to present Church **“as a chaste virgin to Christ”** (II Corinthians 11:2).

“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation [or, ‘manner of life’]” (v. 7).

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: [or, ‘groaning’]: for that is unprofitable for you” (v. 17).

Occupation With the Unchanging Christ—The Safeguard Against False Doctrine

13:8, 9

In connection with these exhortations, we are told that occupation with the unchanging Christ will prevent our being carried about with divers and strange doctrines (vv. 8, 9). Christ suffices. He is **“the same yesterday and to-day and for ever [or, ‘unto the ages’].”** When *He* is before us as our only Object, our hearts are established with *grace*. **“Meats”** profit nothing. By the word **“meats,”** the writer evidently means religion of externalia, an attempt to serve the living God with dead works. As Colossians 2:20-23 states, we have died with Christ to these **“rudiments of the world,”** which are **“not in any honour [value] to the satisfying of the flesh.”**

The Call to Complete Separation from Judaism

13:10-16

Instead of these unprofitable “**meats**,” “**we have an altar**” (v. 10). Like the altar of Israel’s pilgrim fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, our altar speaks of acceptance, worship, communion and testimony.

- In verse 10 we have the peace offering altar;
- In verses 11, 12, the sin offering outside the camp;
- In verse 15, the golden altar of incense.

1. *The peace offering altar* (v. 10)

The peace offering speaks to us of fellowship with God through our Lord Jesus. As the Levitical priests fed upon portions of this offering (Leviticus 7:11-21), likewise, as believer-priests, we feed our souls upon Him who is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). Thus we have fellowship with the Father, who finds complete satisfaction in His Son, our Saviour. It has been pointed out that the reference to “meats” (v. 9) led the inspired writer on to compare the food of the Levitical priests with the fulfillment of the type in Christ (John Owen).

As we have seen throughout this epistle, because of the Christian’s pilgrim-character in the earth, the Jewish Tabernacle, not the Temple, is used to show how Judaism was but “**a shadow of good things to come**” in Christ Jesus (10:1). So it is that here, in verse 10, we read,

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.”

In other words, the priests who continued the Temple worship, rejecting Christ, had “**no right to eat**” at the altar where the Lord Jesus, our Peace offering, provides food for His believer-priests. The Jewish system had no altar after Christ was crucified. It had lost the typical altar, and refused the fulfillment in the antitype. But our altar remains.

2. *The sin offering “without the camp”* (vv. 11, 12)

“For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary [that is, ‘the Holy of Holies’] by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp” (v. 11).

This refers, of course, to the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:27).

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate [of Jerusalem]” (v. 12).

On Calvary, outside the city walls, our sinless Saviour bore all the reproach of the painful and shameful death of the cross. (Cf. Galatians 3:13). He “**who knew no sin**” was “**made sin for us; that we might become the righteousness of God in him**” (II Corinthians 5:21).

- Without the camp of Israel's pitched tents the sin offering was burned.
- Without the camp of unbelieving Jewry our Lord suffered and died for His own.

“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (v. 13).

Thus the inspired writer urged his fellow Hebrew Christians to withdraw completely from the empty mockery that Judaism had become, from the hypocritical religious leaders of that system, which had served its God-given purpose, and had been set aside by Him. Thus the inspired writer exhorts Jews and Gentiles who love the Lord Jesus to come out from among Christ-denying-religious systems, out from among those of the godless world order, bearing His reproach who bore our reproach and shame on the accursed tree.

So, though we are homeless, we are happy, sure of the city of God yet to come. Even the Christ-rejecting nation of Israel was soon to see the Roman legions destroy Jerusalem, with its Temple. On earth we who love the Lord have not a **“continuing city, but we seek one to come”** (v. 14). Abraham looked for that **“city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”** (11:10). It is the heavenly Jerusalem of 12:22—where our Lord dwells with all His holy angels and His redeemed of all the ages. Therefore, in separating himself from the ungodly, the believer in the Lord Jesus loses nothing valuable or abiding, yet gains everything blessed and eternal. This truth leads to praise, as the words of our text go on to show.

3. The golden altar of incense (v. 15)

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (vv. 15, 16),

Outside the camp, sharing the reproach of Christ's rejection, as believer-priests, we offer the sacrifice of praise to God, and the sacrifices of doing good to man. Our risen Lord leads us in this praise to the Father (2:12).

What an honor to be permitted to be identified with Him who suffered without the gate, and who ever lives before the throne of God! Angels were never called to such dignity, to be the companions of a rejected Christ in the *via dolorosa*, to carry their cross after Him!

No wonder they will not have the nearness to Christ in glory which will be the portion of the followers of the Lamb! (See Revelation 5)

Conclusion of the Epistle

1. The apostle's request for prayer (vv. 18, 19).

“Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.”

2. *The doxology* (vv. 20, 21)

The epistle closes with one of the greatest doxologies found in Scripture.

“**The God of peace**” is invoked, a title the apostle Paul loves to give to God in other epistles. The resurrection of the Great Shepherd of the sheep proves how great and how real His victory and the resulting peace. Death has met its Conqueror. Sin has been blotted out. An everlasting covenant has been secured in His blood. Can He not perfect us in every good work to do His will? The power that raised Christ from the dead now works in us. If He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, is there any demand His power cannot fulfill? Will He who has resurrected the Shepherd forsake the sheep?

Once more, before closing, the writer mentions the precious name of Jesus, the Messiah, and exclaims, “**To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**” The “**Amen**” is both God’s and ours. We say, “**Let it be so!**” He declares, “**It shall be so.**”

Christ is the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep (John 10:11). He is the Great Shepherd, “**brought again from the dead,**” who ever lives to intercede and care for His sheep (Hebrews 13:20). And He is the Chief Shepherd who will one day appear to give unto His faithful under-shepherds “**a crown of glory that fadeth not away**” (I Peter 5:4).

It was not by accident that the holy men of old who compiled the book of Psalms arranged Psalms 22, 23 and 24 in the very order which foretold this shepherd-work of our Lord. F. B. Meyer called these the Psalms of the cross, the crook and the crown. Read them; meditate upon them; thank God for them; for they give us a prophetic portrait of our Prophet, Priest and King.

It is significant that the Holy Spirit mentions Christ as the Great Shepherd of the sheep in Hebrews 13:20—the only reference in the epistle to His bodily resurrection, except in 1:6; for in raising the Son from the dead, the Father kept His part of “**the eternal covenant**” which He had made with His only begotten Son. As our Priest, the Lord Jesus had offered Himself as the one perfect sacrifice for sin; that was His part of the covenant with His Father. And in His resurrection that everlasting covenant was consummated. The work of redeeming the lost was finished! And on the basis of that covenant, sealed with the precious blood of Jesus, the vilest of sinners can stand before the holy, Triune God—unashamed, unafraid, clothed in beauty not his own, throughout the endless ages! This is the new covenant, on the basis of which Israel’s God “**will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down**” (Acts 15:16-cf. Hebrews 8:8-12; Jeremiah 31:31-34). It is the new covenant, of which Christ spoke when He gave His disciples the Lord’s Supper, by which to remember His death till He comes to take His own unto Himself. Then they will not need a “**remembrance**” of Him; they will be with Him, beholding His face that is the light of heaven! It is a reaffirmation of God’s unconditional covenant with Abraham (Romans 9:4), into the spiritual blessings of which Gentiles enter by faith.

It has been said that, in this doxology, we have a summary in retrospect of the entire epistle; and that this reference to our Lord’s resurrection is the connecting link between His Priestly sacrifice and His Priestly intercession (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown*).

3. *Personal exhortation and greetings* (vv. 22-24)

Reminding his readers that he had written only a “**few words**” unto them—only thirteen chapters in our Bible—the inspired apostle adds a final exhortation to heed the message of the epistle. The news that Timothy was at liberty would be welcome; the writer himself was already free from his bonds for Christ’s sake. And writing from Italy, doubtless to the Hebrew Christians in the Holy Land—where the Temple was—the writer sent greetings from one group of believers to the other.

4. *The benediction* (v. 25)

If the personal words of verses 18, 19, 22-24 remind us of Paul, the benediction assuredly does. In fact, the apostle closed every one of his letters with some reference to the “**grace**” of God, which seems to have been “**the token**” that he was the human author (II Thessalonians 3:17). No other inspired writer used this token until after Paul was martyred.

“Grace be with you all, Amen.”

Recapitulation—Hebrews: The Transfiguration of Judaism

The faith of Israel is not abolished; it is transfigured.

- In James, the law is not abrogated; it becomes the law of liberty.
- In I Peter the theocracy is not wound up; the Christian society is a royal priesthood.
- In Hebrews the entire service of the Jewish sanctuary becomes the symbol of the real in the heavens, now opened up in Christ.
- In Revelation we see how the kingdom of God, which was begun in Israel, is consummated in the Church.

The persons addressed

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written without doubt to the Jewish Christian community in the Holy Land. There is no evidence of any Gentile believers among them. The persons addressed had long been converts, having received the gospel from those who had personally known the Lord. Because they had been bereft of their leaders, they were in danger of returning to the attractive outward forms of Judaism, as expressed in the Temple still standing (See Josephus, Antiquities, XX. 9, No. 1).

The book of Hebrews was written from Italy, not Rome, most likely from one of the communities of Jewish Christians associated with the mother church in Jerusalem.

Hebrews contains two sections:

1. *Instruction* (1:1-10:18)

2. Exhortations of a practical nature (10:19-13:25)

The last four verses might be called an appendix of an epistolary character.

Summary of the doctrine (1:1-10:18):

1. The Messiah and prophets and angels (1:1-2:18)

As Son He is above both prophets and angels in His essential, divine glory. But in His incarnation He was “made a little [or, ‘for a little while’] lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” This, however, entitled Him to become Saviour.

a. *Chapter 1 shows that the writer regarded Jesus as the supreme manifestation of the Lord God Himself.* Hence to neglect His salvation was a graver sin than to transgress the Law of Moses which had been given by angels (2:1-4).

b. *Chapter 2:5 takes up the subject of the humiliation of this glorious Being, essentially higher than angels.* Psalm 8 is quoted to show that the perfect world, for which we are looking, is to be put under the feet of One who has been lower than the angels. Jesus is such an One.

2. Jesus and the greatest personalities in Jewish history: Moses and Joshua (3:1-4:13)

a. *Jesus and Moses* (chap. 3)

b. *Jesus and Joshua* (chap. 4)

Each of these sections, like the foregoing, gives first a didactic statement, then a solemn warning.

The warning is this: as disobedience to Moses shut Israel out of the Promised Land by the space of forty years, so unbelief in Jesus shuts man out from the rest of God. And though Joshua led Israel into Canaan; Psalm 95:11 shows that he could not bring the people into the true rest of God. Only Jesus, the Messiah, could do that. Hence we are charged to hold fast our confession.

3. Jesus and the Aaronic priesthood (4:14-10:18)

This section, like the two previous sections, also falls into two parts.

a. *The person of Jesus and Aaron contrasted, as having to do with the qualifications of a priest*

b. *The efficacy of the two ministries contrasted*

In chapter 5 we see wherein the Aaronic and the Messianic priesthoods resemble each other. Then, after a long parenthesis about the lack of spiritual ripeness on the part of his readers (5:11-6:20), the apostle proceeds to show wherein the priesthood of the Messiah is superior to that of Aaron (7:1-28). Psalm 110:4 is quoted to show that the Messiah is there addressed as Priest after the order of Melchizedec, founded on the oath of God, and endued with eternal permanency.

Christ's sacrifice is of abiding value, and the One who was offered in it has a spotlessness which differentiates Him from the sons of Aaron.

4. The Messiah and the New Covenant (8:1-10:18)

Here we get the very core of the teaching of the epistle. The Messiah has a higher ministry than either Moses or Aaron, as He is the Mediator of a better covenant, based on a better sacrifice, offered in a better sanctuary, that is a heavenly. This entitles us to enter the very Holiest with boldness (literally, with citizen rights of free speech, in contrast with the servility of slaves) through the blood of Jesus. To apostatize from this privilege is a sin for which there is no sacrifice, as it is a trampling under foot the very sacrifice which alone can put away sin (10:26-31).

Application of the doctrine (10:19-13:25)

In view of the fact that the Hebrews still clung to the externalia of Judaism, 11:1-12:3 is a valuable line of exhortation. The ancient worthies let go the seen, in order to lay hold on the unseen and eternal. This is the very essence of faith. Verse 1 is the text of this section.

In chapter 12 the inspired writer adds to the duty of faith that of *patience or endurance*. The example of Jesus as the One who endured the cross is to inspire us to run with patience our race.

In chapter 13 the apostle adds another duty, *self-renunciation*. He calls to his readers to make a complete break with their Jewish past, to go unto the Lord Jesus without the camp, bearing His reproach. It was this he had been leading up to in all the epistle. He wanted to prevent a wholesale reversion to Judaism.

Attachment to Jewish ceremonialism had stunted the spiritual life of the Jewish Christians. The war with Rome was impending, and they would be placed in an embarrassing position, between their patriotism on the one hand and their faith on the other.

Hegesippus records that, after Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, Jewish Christians were excluded from the Temple, with the exception of James. This greatly discouraged them. Besides, they had confidently hoped for the conversion of their brethren, an event that seemed farther off than ever. Hence they were tempted to continue in the ceremonies of Judaism.

The Epistle to the Hebrews must be read in the light of these thoughts, if one is to appreciate its message.

Hebrews—the Epistle of the Opened Heavens (cf. Psalm 110:4):

1. *Hebrews shows us the One in whom God has given His last, complete and final revelation (1:1-3, 13).*

2. *It shows us the High Priest greater than Aaron (8:1, 2).*

3. *It shows us the One whose perfect sacrifice has abolished every other and has perfected forever His people (10:12, 13).*

4. *It shows us the Author and Finisher of faith on the throne (12:2).*

Assignment for Exam 12

1. Review the entire course.

2. God calls us to a separated life. He will repay our devotion “**exceeding abundantly**” above all that we could ask or think.

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Bibliography

For the student who wants to do further study in connection with *The Glories of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, the books listed below are particularly valuable. They are not required for the completion of this course.

English, E. Schuyler. *Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*

Ironside, H. A. *Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*

Ironside, H. A. *Levitical Offerings*

C. H. M. *Notes on the Book of Leviticus*

Newell, William R. *Hebrews—Verse by Verse*

Pettingill, William L. *Simple Studies in Hebrews*

Ridout, Samuel. *Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews*

Ridout, Samuel. *Lectures on the Tabernacle*

Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *Let Us Go On*

Wuest, Kenneth S. *Hebrews in the Greek New Testament*

CHAPTER TWELVE

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE MOODY CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL FOR GRADING OF YOUR EXAMS – IF YOU WISH TO COMPLETE THEM, CONSIDER THEM AS AN OPEN BOOK EXAM

1 Name the six features of the kingdom which cannot be moved, as presented in Hebrews 12:28 and 13:1-6. (10 points)

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____
- (d) _____
- (e) _____
- (f) _____

2. In the right-hand margin write “True” or “False” after each of the following statements. (18 points)

- a. The Jewish Temple is used to illustrate the truth that Judaism was but “a shadow of good things to come” in Christ. _____
- b. The Jewish system had no meaningful altar after Christ was crucified. _____
- c. Hebrews 13:11, 12 refers to the ritual of the Day of Atonement. _____
- d. Hebrew Christians were urged to separate themselves from Judaism completely. _____
- e. We who love the Lord have no abiding city on earth _____
- f. Generosity is not particularly a Christian trait. _____

3. In the blank space write the letter of the correct answer. (12 points)

(1) The persons addressed in this epistle were

- (a) Unbelieving Jews
- (b) Gentile believers
- (c) Jewish Christians
- (d) No particular group _____

(2) The new covenant

- (a) Is a minor theme in this epistle
- (b) Was instituted by Moses

- (c) Was based on the Aaronic priesthood
- (d) Entitles us to enter “the holiest of all”

(3) Our best safeguard against false doctrine is

- (a) Christian fellowship
- (b) occupation with the unchanging Christ
- (c) special attention to external rites of religious worship
- (d) The writings of the Church fathers

4. In the blank space write the number of the verse in Hebrews 13 which gives the following admonitions and warnings. (10 points)

- a. The safeguard against false doctrine
- b. The instruction to remember the spiritual guides who had finished their course
- c. The call to bear Christ’s reproach without the camp
- d. The admonition to avoid serving God with dead works
- e. The injunction to do good to our fellow men

5. In a few words give the meaning of the following. (15 points)

a. The peace-offering altar (13:10)

b. The sin offering “without the camp” (13:11,12)

c. The golden altar of incense (13:15)

6. Complete the following statements concerning Christ, the Shepherd. (10 points)

a. As the Good Shepherd, He _____

b. As the Great Shepherd, He _____

c. As the Chief Shepherd, He _____

d. The Psalms which foretell Christ as the Shepherd are _____

e. F. B. Meyer called these the Psalms of the _____

7. With your open Bible, tell in your own words how the following verses speak of Christ in this "Epistle of the Opened Heavens." (16 points)

a. Hebrews 1:1-3, 13 _____

b. Hebrews 8:1, 2 _____

c. Hebrews 10:12, 13 _____

8. Answer in a few words. (9 points)

a. Which of the practical admonitions in this chapter has spoken most clearly to your own heart ?

b. What do you intend to do to apply it to your own life?

c. State one truth from Hebrews 13 which has made the Lord Jesus Christ more precious to you.

~ end of book ~

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