

Hebrews

The Antidote to False Teaching

Hebrews 13:7-14

INTRODUCTION:

BODY:

I. False Teaching is a Perpetual Danger for God's People.

Hebrews 13:9 (NASB95)

Ephesians 4:14-15 (NASB95)

2 Timothy 2:15-18 (NASB95)

Acts 17:11 (NASB95)

Matthew 7:15 (NASB95)

Acts 20:29-31 (NASB95)

Colossians 2:8-9, 16-17 (NASB95)

II. Imitate the Faith of Godly Leaders.

Hebrews 13:7 (NASB95)

Galatians 1:6-8 (NASB95)

III. Hold Firmly to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Sacrificial Death.

Hebrews 13:8 (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:9b (NASB95)

Galatians 1:9 (NASB95)

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:10 (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:11-12 (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:13 (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 (NASB95)

CONCLUSION:

John 15:18 (NASB95)

Hebrews 13:14 (NASB95)

Hebrews

The Antidote to False Teaching

Hebrews 13:7-14

INTRODUCTION:

All Stand and Read Scripture

Hebrews 13:7-14 (NASB95)

⁷ Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹ Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited. 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 holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. ¹³ So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. ¹⁴ For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.

Prayer

Following is a quote from a retired pastor named Steve Cole. "I confess that the first twenty or so times that I read our text, it seemed to me to be a disjointed, random bunch of verses. I could not see any unified theme. But the more I meditated on these verses, I came to see that there is a common theme, namely, the danger of false teaching and the true antidote to it, namely, the person and work of Jesus Christ."

Here is the gist of our passage this morning and how it fits together. The author was concerned that his readers would be "**carried away by varied and strange teachings**" in verse 9 including returning to Judaism. So he calls them to remember the godly teachers who had spoken the word of God to them in verse 7. Even though these men had now died, we know that Jesus Christ, whom they preached, is the same yesterday, today, and forever as stated in verse 8. Verses 9-12 tell of His grace and His sacrificial death on the cross as the center of sound doctrine. Jesus and His death on the cross have become our altar, which supersedes and replaces the Jewish altar in the temple. Therefore, we are told in verse 13 that we must turn our backs on Judaism and every other religion and hold firmly to Christ and the cross. Then we are reminded in verse 14 that if such faith leads to hardship, rejection, persecution, or even death, keep in mind that we are not living for rewards in this life, but for the reward He has promised us in heaven.

Therefore, in order to avoid being carried away by false teaching, we are to imitate the faith of godly leaders and hold firmly to the centrality of Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death, and the promise of heaven. Let's look at it in more detail.

BODY:

I. False Teaching is a Perpetual Danger for God's People.

Hebrews 13:9 (NASB95)

⁹ Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

We live in a day when evangelical Christians minimize the importance of sound doctrine and even speak against it as something that divides us and goes against Christ's commands to love one another

"Can we all get along?"

This famous line was spoken by Rodney King in a press conference following the Los Angeles riots of 1992.

Often misquoted as "can't we all just get along?" this quote—correctly worded or not—is very popular, whether the conflict has to do with racial equality or something else entirely.

After being spotted by the California Highway Patrol, Rodney King led police on a high-speed chase through the San Fernando Valley in March of 1991. A man named George Holliday recorded the confrontation between King and multiple police officers when King was caught. This confrontation led to King's hospitalization.

The officers were charged with using excessive force and were later acquitted. Their acquittal ignited racial tension across the country. Riots swept L.A., injuring hundreds and prompting King to go on TV with his plea, "Can we all get along?"

The emphasis today among many Evangelical Christians is on coming together where we can agree, rather than dividing over doctrines where we disagree. For us to say, "I am right and you are wrong" over doctrinal matters is considered by many to be signs of pride and intolerance. The concept that any religious teaching may be universally true or false runs counter to the modern mindset. But the scriptures consistently warn us of false doctrine. **Yes!** We are to love our brother, and we do desire to get along with each other, but we must also be aware that the scriptures teach absolute truth and we must humbly defend it with those who have gone astray.

Three verses come to mind:

Ephesians 4:14-15 (NASB95)

¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

2 Timothy 2:15-18 (NASB95)

¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of **truth**. ¹⁶ But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, ¹⁷ and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸ *men* who have gone **astray from the truth** saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

When we are confronted by various doctrines, we must be like the Bereans...

Acts 17:11 (NASB95)

¹¹ Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures **daily** to see whether these things were so (or **true**).

But the New Testament is filled with warnings against false doctrine. Jesus warned...

Matthew 7:15 (NASB95)

¹⁵ "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders to be on guard for savage wolves..

Acts 20:29-31 (NASB95)

²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

In Colossians 2:8-17, he warned against being taken captive by philosophy and those who imposed rules about food and drink and the observance of certain days. Due to time constraints, I am only going to read verses 8-9 and 16-17. I would encourage you to read the entire passage on your own time to understand the full significance of the passage.

Colossians 2:8-9, 16-17 (NASB95)

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. ⁹ **For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,...**

Paul is saying that Jesus **is** God in the flesh. He is fully God and He is fully man.

¹⁶ Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— ¹⁷ things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the **substance** belongs to Christ.

The law was just a shadow of things to come. Christ was the reality to the law. He fulfilled the law perfectly and became our perfect sacrifice, something that only God could do! Although the Hebrews knew exactly what the author was referring to in our text, we do not. It may have been Jewish regulations about clean or unclean foods, or some Jewish sacrificial ceremony, such as eating the Passover lamb, that was supposed to have benefited the partakers. The Jews put a lot of weight on these foods because they were associated with the Jewish altar. Taking them away declared that their altar, which was the center of their religion, was of no more use. The Judaizing Christians thought that somehow the use of such food had a place in establishing or confirming the heart, perhaps even in the matter of salvation. But such practices were of no benefit because they pulled the Jews away from the only means of salvation, namely, God's grace in Christ. **Notice that Paul says specifically that Jesus was truly "God in the flesh"!**

The main point to note here is that Satan has always infiltrated the church with false teaching that invariably dilutes or digresses from God's grace in Jesus Christ. If we buy into the modern idea that doctrinal truth is a personal preference of minimal importance,

we join these early Hebrews, in danger of being “**carried away by varied and strange teaching.**” To deny the vital importance of sound doctrine makes us prime targets for the enemy’s attacks.

II. Imitate the Faith of Godly Leaders.

Hebrews 13:7 (NASB95)

⁷ Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

This verse is implying that the leaders before you successfully finished their course. Considering how well these men lived, we are to imitate their faith, which implies both their faith and conduct.

Galatians 1:6-8 (NASB95)

⁶ I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷ which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸ **But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!**

These men “spoke the word of God” to the Hebrews. God’s Word is the only source for sound teaching. Thus, as leaders, we should take very seriously what we teach. We must be like the Bereans and spend much time in the scripture to assure that what we are teaching is truth. We will be held accountable for our teaching if it causes someone to fall away. Yet we live in a day when very few pastors devote themselves to teaching God’s Word in a systematic way. Many evangelical churches, in an attempt to reach the unchurched, have abandoned expository preaching through the Bible verse by verse, for fear that some of the difficult doctrines may offend people. They aim the church service at giving the “customers” what they want: topical messages on how to have a happy life. They avoid talking about sin or judgment or anything controversial. In many cases, their messages could have come out of *Reader’s Digest* rather than the Bible!

III. Hold Firmly to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Sacrificial Death.

Verse 8 seems out of context, but I believe the author put it here in a somewhat abrupt manner to make a point:

Hebrews 13:8 (NASB95)

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Sometimes people become so enamored with some godly man or his teaching that they are devastated when that man dies. The author is not diminishing the value of sound teachers, but he is saying that after the teachers die, Jesus Christ remains solid, steady, and unchanging. The unchanging Christ and His "once for all time" sacrifice for our sins is the perpetual antidote to false teaching. The substance of Paul's' teaching was “**Jesus Christ, and Him crucified**”. (1 Cor. 2:2) That must be our focus, also.

Hebrews 13:9b (NASB95)

...for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

Invariably, false teaching goes astray on the doctrine of God's grace. The error of the Judaizers, whom Paul confronted in Galatians, was to add the need to be circumcised to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone. They could have argued that circumcision was a God-given command that predated the law. But Paul said that to add circumcision or anything else to the gospel of God's grace is to incur eternal damnation.

Galatians 1:9 (NASB95)

⁹ As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

To add human works or merit or indulgences or penance to Christ's death on the cross as necessary for salvation is to commit the Galatian heresy. But this idea of works for salvation is ingrained in the fallen human heart. Many people, both believers and unbelievers, still think they will go to heaven because they have always tried to be a good person and never hurt anyone

But as Paul explained...

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB95)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

So **all** of our salvation, including our faith, is God's gift according to His **unmerited** favor.

Hebrews 13:10 (NASB95)

¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

Once again the author of Hebrews is repeating the truth that he has emphasized before, that Christ is superior to the Jewish sacrificial system, because He fulfilled it. It is likely that the Jews were trying to draw the Hebrew Christians back to Judaism by saying, "We still have the altar in the temple where we offer sacrifices as our people have done since the days of Moses. But, you Christians have no such altar. So how can you say that Christianity is superior to Judaism when you abandon such a central thing as the altar?"

To answer this taunt, the author replies, "**We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.**" This is referring to the priests who offered the sacrifices and/or to the Jewish worshipers who brought sacrifices to the temple. The author is saying that as long as the Jews brought their sacrifices to the temple, they were missing God's true altar, namely, His Son who gave Himself as the complete and final sacrifice for our sins.

Hebrews 13:11-12 (NASB95)

¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned outside the camp. ¹² Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

The worshipers were allowed to eat some sacrifices, but they were not permitted to eat the sin offering. After the blood was sprinkled on the altar, the carcass had to be taken outside of the camp and burned. The author then applies this to Jesus in verse 12, who "**suffered outside the gate,**" shedding His blood "**that He might sanctify the people**".

Sanctification is referring to how Christ cleansed us of our sins at the time of our salvation.

Thus his point is that Jesus Christ and His death on the cross is our altar, far superior to the Jewish altar, because He fulfilled it. In a spiritual, not material, way we feed on Him by faith, even as the Jewish priests used to feed on some of the sacrifices. But unless a person abandoned Judaism and its literal sacrifices and trusted in Christ as God's supreme and final sacrifice, he had no right to come to the Christian "altar," which is Christ Himself.

Hebrews 13:13 (NASB95)

¹³ So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

The author applies this by saying, "Let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." To the original readers the message was clear: You must leave Judaism to follow Jesus Christ. You cannot hang onto your old religion and just "add Jesus" to the mix. You must leave the old and turn exclusively to Jesus, even if it means that we may have to deal with those who take exception to the truth of the gospel.

Paul wrote...

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 (NASB95)

²³ but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

People are not offended if you remove the cross from Christianity. It seems everyone can get behind good works and loving others. But the cross confronts and offends human pride. Sinners do not like to hear about the necessity of shed blood. But without Christ's shed blood, without the cross outside the camp of man's religion of works, there is no salvation.

CONCLUSION:

If you receive objections from others for the sake of Christ, remember that it is *His* reproach that we are enduring. Remember what Christ told us...

John 15:18 (NASB95)

¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated you*."

If our faith leads to hardship, rejection, persecution, or even death, keep in mind that we are not living for rewards in this life, but for the reward He has promised us in heaven.

Hebrews 13:14 (NASB95)

¹⁴ For **here** we do **not** have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.

The Jews boasted in Jerusalem as the center of the earth as far as worshiping God went. Perhaps the Jews were trying to entice the Hebrew Christians back into the Jewish fold by saying, "We have Jerusalem, but you have no such glorious city!" The author says, "Oh,

but we do have a city! Ours is the same city that Abraham and the patriarchs were seeking, that heavenly city that God prepared for them and us”

Much false teaching puts the focus on the present, or on false claims about heaven. Islam, for example, promises suicide martyrs a better life in heaven, with beautiful virgins to satisfy the man’s lusts. Other false teachers say, in effect, “Forget about heaven. What good is religion if it does not give you the good life here and now?” The “health and wealth” heresy is of this sort.

Sound doctrine is always founded on the word of God. It centers on and exalts the unchanging Christ. Our salvation comes to us by God’s grace, not by any human works. It was accomplished by the death of Christ on the cross on behalf of our sins. It deflects false teaching. And it puts all its hopes in the rewards of heaven, not the things of this world.

You do not have to wade through all of the religious writings in the world to tell if they are good or bad. You start by examining what it says about Jesus Christ and how it teaches the way of salvation. If it proclaims Jesus as eternal God in human flesh and faith in His sacrifice as the only way of salvation, it is absolute truth and it is sound. Do not be carried away by anything else.

What a Day That Will Be.