

**HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST**  
**"Part XXVI: Practical GUIDANCE Out Of Errant Ritualism"**  
**(Hebrews 13:7-17)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

There are a host of religious views floating about today, and the unwary believer can be quickly fooled if he's not careful:

(1) Several years ago, I received a pamphlet in the mail from an unknown resident in Waterbury. It reads across the top: "Did you know that The Lord Is Present Now! . . . Examine the Scriptures which show that our Lord's second advent is an **invisible** presence and has **already begun** . . . "

So, how do I know if Christ has already returned to earth or NOT? It makes a lot of difference, for if He is here, then I had better try making the most of this life as this must be the Millennial **Kingdom!**

(2) Another book came my way entitled "Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . " In it, on page 244, I read: "Christ took away the curse of the law, thereby liberating believers from its condemnation. His doing so, however, did **not** mean that the law was **abolished**, giving us liberty to **violate** its principles. The abundant testimony of Scripture regarding the **perpetuity** of the law, **refutes** such a view . . . Christ's death magnified the law, upholding its universal **authority** . . . "

Well, are we Christians then supposed to keep the law? If so, we are meeting today on the WRONG DAY, for the Sabbath is supposed to be from sundown on FRIDAY to sundown SATURDAY! How do we know if this belief is RIGHT in view of the fact that our Church leaders and whole segments of Christians meet on SUNDAY?!

How do we believers know if we are to keep or not keep Old Testament regulations? How do we know if a new teaching like the one mentioned that says Christ has already returned is true?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . . )

***Need:*** "There are a host of new-fangled religious beliefs out there, and an equal number of those calling for a return to the ANCIENT days of the Mosaic Law! How can I find my way through the thick of errant ritualisms of old AND new error to live as God desires?!"

- I. **The author of Hebrews was concerned that his Hebrew Christian readers overcome the Judaistic errors confronting them so they could live godly lives, Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, p. 1729, "Readership."**
- II. **In closing, he gave PRACTICAL guidance on discerning which teachings to PRESERVE and which ones to MOVE BEYOND:**
  - A. First, the author revealed when believers were to stand **fast**, sticking **CONSERVATIVELY** to the beliefs given to them, Hebrews 13:7-8:
    1. God wants believers to **hold fast** to the teachings, example of faith and manner of life of **proven** godly **Christian** leaders of old, 13:7.
    2. Thus, any "new" idea or practice that **counters** what **proven** godly **Christian** leaders of old both taught and lived was to be resisted!
    3. In **particular**, any teaching against what they had been taught on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ was also to be resisted, 13:8:
      - a. The author claimed Christ stands timelessly changeless, 13:8.
      - b. In the context with verse 7, that means Christ is changeless in His Person and Work akin to the stability of past godly leaders.
      - c. Thus, **beliefs** in the Person and Work of Christ were to be held without changing with "new" ideas as follows: (a) The deity of Christ was to be regarded as unchangeable, 1:1-3; (b) The substitutionary atonement of Christ was to be regarded as unchangeable, Hebrews 9:24-28a. (c) The Second Coming Of Christ was to be regarded as unchangeable, 9:28b. (d) The Eternal Judgment was to be regarded as unchangeable, 9:27-28. (e) In application, other Scriptural doctrines on Christ' Virgin Birth (Matt. 1:21-23), His Bodily Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-8) and Sinlessness (2 Cor. 5:21) were to be seen as unchangeable!
  - B. Second, the author revealed when believers were to **move beyond OLD TRUTHS** and stick with **new** ones they had received, 13:9-16:
    1. The Hebrew Christian readers were to **move beyond OLD TESTAMENT** teachings that are outdated by the age of **grace**, 9:
      - a. The Hebrew readers faced pressure from their countrymen to revert back to Old Testament practices, Ibid., Ryrie, p. 1729.
      - b. Accordingly, they were confronted with a barrage of teachings on dietary regulations typical of Judaistic legalism, cf. Heb. 13:9.
      - c. They were to respond to pressures to revert back to the dispensation of the Law by **moving beyond the LAW** to what New Testament teachers presented on Christ's **GRACE**, 13:9b!

2. Having stated this fact, the author of Hebrews refuted specific Judaistic anti-Christian errors these believers faced, Heb. 13:10-16:
  - a. Though the Judaists sought to make these Hebrew Christians feel guilty by their not partaking of the earthly altar, the writer of Hebrews noted Christians partake of the heavenly altar's blessings of which the Judaizers had no part, Hebrews 13:10.
  - b. As the bodies of the temple's sacrifice animals were burned outside the camp, Christ was similarly made a reproach outside of Jerusalem for our sins, Heb. 13:11-12. Accordingly, we followers of Christ need to **bear** this reproach of the cross by daring to follow Christ before opponents, and be willing to suffer for our stand in doing so, Hebrews 13:13.
  - c. Our motivation for shouldering such reproach is our heavenly destiny of vast blessing that contrast with this life, Heb. 13:14.
  - d. Accordingly, as we bear reproach by resisting legalism to live by grace today, we are to praise God and do good deeds, 13:15-16!
- C. Third, the author revealed **God currently** supplied **credible Church leaders** whose leadership in such issues was to be **heeded**, Heb. 13:17:
  1. God makes leaders in the church responsible to Him for their leadership actions and decisions over His people, Heb. 13:17b.
  2. Accordingly, God expects the congregation to follow the leadership of their overseers so that their job is joyful and not hard, 13:17a, c.
  3. Otherwise, leaders can be so pressured by resistance from people that their effectiveness is diminished to the **church's** harm, 13:17d.

***Lesson Application:*** *To enjoy God's lead through the maze of theological error confronting the believer today, we must START by (1) trusting Christ as Savior to become part of Christ's spiritual fold, Jn. 3:16; Jn. 10:26-28. (2) As believers, we should (a) confess any sins that hinder our fellowship with God (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) rely on the Holy Spirit for behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23). (c) Then we can hold to the teachings of proven, past godly Christian saints and to the unchanging doctrines of Christ's Person and Work. (d) We can also resist getting mired in the Old Testament dispensation's legalism by living in Christ's New Testament era GRACE and (e) pay attention to reputable Christian church leaders in seeing through the maze of errant beliefs!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

(1) In our sermon introduction, we noted a pamphlet I received teaching Christ had already returned! To find out if that idea is correct or not, we apply the message and find insight!

(a) First, in keeping with Hebrews 13:7, we know we must hold in high regard the teaching of the Apostle Paul.

(b) Next, we see Paul **complained** in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 about some men, Hymenaeus and Philetus. They had "erred, saying that the resurrection is past already . . . "

(c) Well, the **resurrection** Paul addressed was that of the Christian's at the **rapture**, 1 Thess. 4:13-18. That **rapture** occurs **before** God's wrath, 1 Thess. 5:9-10. That **wrath** comes **before** **Christ's RETURN** according to Revelation 19-20. Thus, since the Tribulation and our resurrection are yet future, so is Christ's coming. **We should reject the idea Christ has returned just like Paul urged Timothy to resist the same OLD error of Hymenaeus and Philetus!**

(2) In our introduction, we noted the book, "Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . " that taught the Christian is still under the Law.

(a) In keeping with Hebrews 13:7 and 9-16, we recall Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the godly founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, wrote in volume 3, p. 240-241 of his theology about the Christian's relation to the law. He quoted the writings of **Paul**, saying, ". . . because the law is 'holy, and just, and good,' it is difficult for many to accept the New Testament teaching that the law is not the prescribed rule of life for the believer . . . Over against this idea is the **uncompromising warning** to the Christian that he by the death of Christ is **free from** the **law** . . . To be 'free from the law' (Rom. 8:2), to be 'dead to the law' (Rom. 7:4), and to be 'delivered from the law' (Rom. 7:6; cf. Rom. 6:14; 2 Cor. 3:11; Gal. 3:25), describe a position in **grace** before God that is rich and full unto everlasting blessing." **In accord with what godly forebears have said, and with the grace of Christ, though we are not to sin, Christians are not under the JURISDICTION of the Law! We live under Christ's GRACE!**

**Sticking to the beliefs of credible former leaders, heeding beliefs on Christ's Person and Work as unchanging and moving beyond the legalism of the Law with the oversight of credible church leaders will help us to discern truth from error.**