

We've been given a look at the city above and those associated with it. And another faithful warning of the end of the world is given to the unsaved. But indeed it is a welcome promise to the believers. Our God is a consuming fire in our defense even while we are still down here. We are no less safe down here than up there. So while we are still in this condemned world we do not have to be part of it and its deeds. No! The path is clearly marked for us. Not another Law to obey but a course of conduct befitting the heavenly hope now before us. A manner of life befitting our Lord and Savior Who was here and now is there waiting to come for us. Eight exhortations are given

- 1.-Continuing brotherly love. Greek: "philadelphia."
- 2.-Hospitality, both for persons known and those unrecognized.
- 3.-Prayerful recalling to mind, empathizing leading to caring acts of mercy if possible,
- for the imprisoned for their faith, and even for those imprisoned for their crimes who need the Savior.
- for those suffering adversity of any kind.
- 4.-Respect for and enjoyment of marriage, not indulgence in immoral, unclean acts and practices, see ch. 12:16.
- 5.-Contentment not covetousness.
- 6.-Neither fearful or fainting for the Lord Himself is our helper. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

7.-Remembering our predecessors in the faith, considering well the their attitude, their example and the spiritual encouragement and admonishment they gave us. Interestingly the Spirit urges us to consider the outcome of their faith, the end results of their life style, their behaviors and associations, whether positive or negative. Though they had people like Peter, James, John, Stephen, Phillip, Timothy, Barnabas, Paul, and many others named and unnamed in scripture. These weren't at all perfect, and God hasn't hid their failures. But they were nevertheless used to serve the Lord and the well-being of His saints. And don't we fondly remember brothers and sisters, now with the Lord, who influenced us? Godly parents and relatives and faithful saints in the assembly. Some individuals touched our hearts personally, some through faithful preaching, some through writings, whether brief and pointed tracts or longer expositions of scriptural lessons and principles. And please don't ignore or neglect the writings as you study scripture, for God has provided and preserved their ministry for our benefit, even if written long before we were born. Ministry given to one generation may refer to then-current events now long forgotten, may use terms, examples or expressions considered quaint now, or vocabulary we can't relate to nowadays. But we should be willing cross these bridges to the past for the rewards are real. Those written in the 1800's were in particular part of what now appears to have been a turning point in the history of the church on earth. They revived scriptural truth that had long ago been given up, even before the Catholic church became dominant fourteen centuries ago. Nor was the truth of the priesthood

of all believers part of the Reformation which earlier had recovered the crucial truth of salvation by faith, not works. Therefore, the "brethren" writings are valuable, useful resources provided and preserved by God for our benefit. Treasure them. A number of these, originally published in books or periodicals, have recently been made available "online" for convenient free access without large investments in bound books. See *** at bottom of page for two sites. Dig in!

Jesus Christ the same yesterday today and forever!

We know from John 1:1-3 that Jesus is God. He is Eternal. God the Eternal Son come in the flesh, ch. 1:1-3. Why does the Spirit say the "same yesterday" instead of the "same eternally"? Does this indicate that the God the Son was not always Jesus Christ but became the man Jesus Christ at a chosen point in time? Can we understand that He was Son but not Jesus until conceived by Mary by the Holy Spirit about two thousand years ago? Some try to reason He became Son at conception or birth, but scripture is clear, He is God the Eternal Son. Hebrews 10:6 quotes a Psalm "a body hast thou prepared me," a body for an existing person, the Existing Person, God the Son! Romans 1:4 states He became of the seed of David He wasn't that always. But He was/is always Son.

The rest of this statement is full too. He is the Same today though bodily now a resurrected Man in heaven. And He is the same forever. Once He became a Man He is a Man forever. What humility and grace, "a little lower than the angels," ch 2:9. One who, though equal with God, emptied Himself that at the name of Jesus (the Man) every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus as Lord, Philippians 2:5-11.

8.-Not carried about by diverse and strange doctrines. There were many different teachings floating about back then. More now. Strange to scripture, mixtures of truth and fiction and pagan fables. Worse today. But the doctrines most likely to trouble the Hebrew believers were those preserving the Law of Moses, its commands and its rituals. They are to forsake these as Law. We are too. Even though some are presented anew by Jesus Christ and His apostles, they are given under His Own authority as Christ, stating what is righteous, expected and seemly in His Kingdom. Matthew presents the King and His Kingdom, under His own authority, not that of Moses. Righteousness hasn't changed, but the motive is love for the King, not salvation of the soul. They were no longer to be taken up with meat, drink and offerings. The King Himself was the Sacrifice and the Altar and the Priest as foreshadowed by the Law. We have the real thing now. He is Better! He is All! Yet He was rejected and suffered horribly at the hands of His Own people Israel. He suffered in fulfillment of the foreshadowing offerings of the Law. Go outside the camp to Him indeed!

By Ron Canner, June 3, 2009