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# Words of Truth

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## Hebrews 13:14

By: Brian A. Yeager

For those Jews in the first century that decided to follow Jesus they were certain to face reproach. Our last article concluded with that point (Hebrews 13:13). You can see how Jews that followed our Lord were treated when you read about the healing of a blind man and what happened thereafter (John 9:1-41). Once a Jew was converted to Christ they were on the outside of the Jewish community. Being on the outside of their previous community, they needed motivation not to look backward. Looking back makes one unfit for the kingdom (Luke 9:57-62). That is where our current study comes in. Notice: *“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come”* (Hebrews 13:14).

Life on earth is not permanent. That was previously written in this letter (Hebrews 9:27; cf. Genesis 3:19, II Samuel 14:14, Psalms 89:48, Ecclesiastes 3:19-21, Ecclesiastes 12:7-14, and Romans 5:12). In this epistle it was already taught that Abraham sought a city that is not of this world (Hebrews 11:8-16). Now again, this has to sink in for those whom this letter is written and for us too.

When Paul wrote of the affliction that Timothy and himself were facing (II Corinthians 4:7-12), this was written: *“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”* (II Corinthians 4:15-5:1).

The mind of a faithful Christian needs to be focused on things above (Colossians 3:1-4). Even when material things are lost, the kingdom has to be sought first with a trust in our Lord (Matthew 6:19-34). For those to whom this was originally written, they needed not to worry that they may have been excluded from the synagogues of the Jews. They needed not to be worried that their community might have shunned them. They needed not to worry about being persecuted and possibly even chased from their homes (i.e. Acts 8:1-4). They could center their minds on what is to come rather than what might have been lost. Whether them or us, we should focus on finishing the course and receiving the reward (II Timothy 4:6-8).

The problem then and now is that people often love the world and the things of the world. Even though such is sinful (I John 2:15-17), it still was and is a struggle for those who proclaim to be the children of God. Among the first Christians (James 1:18) there was a strong desire for friendship with the world (James 4:4). So, to remind Christians that this world is temporary was and is a necessary teaching. There is a text I don't want to just reference, but quote in this article. It nails the subject matter far greater than anything else I can write.

Notice: *“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself”* (Philippians 3:4-21).

Paul and Timothy wrote the letter to the saints in Philippi (Philippians 1:1) from which you just read the statements above. From the context, Paul was speaking of himself. Timothy was not a full Jew (Acts 16:1-4). The Holy Spirit moved that writing (I Corinthians 2:1-16) and the words were from our Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:1-14). So, it was and is the will of our Lord that we realize we have not finished the course while alive in this world. Salvation is at the end (Romans 6:17-23 and I Peter 1:3-9). That continual city is something we have to wait for (Romans 8:24-25, I Corinthians 1:4-7, and I Thessalonians 4:13-5:11). That end, our salvation, will mean this world has ended (II Peter 3:9-14). There is nothing here to cling to.