

Let Us Have a Happy New Year! – Part 2

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12:28 – 13:25

It is one thing to wish for a Happy New Year. It is another thing to pursue a Happy New Year by drawing near to God, feeding our souls, and taking care of our relationships with other people (spouse, family, friends, and neighbors). Our Scripture reading often uses the word “*Let*” or the phrase “*Let Us / Let’s*”. This causes us to look at ways we can cooperate with God and with God’s people. The focus of such language causes us to consider our personal life with God, the life that we have with a local church, and how we relate to the family of God in a larger sense (Hebrews 10:19-25).

Let’s focus on the instructions found in Hebrews 12:28 – 13:25

Hebrews 12:28-29 – Let us have grace. Let us be gracious and grateful. Let us serve God gratefully, acceptably, and reverently with awe (godly fear) – knowing that we are receiving a glorious kingdom with Christ and knowing that God is a fire that consumes all sin and pride. Consider Psalm 100:1-5; Hebrews 13:9; II Timothy 2:1; Romans 8:15-18 (Matthew 16:24-27); Titus 2:11-14; I Peter 1:3-8; 4:12-19. In Hebrews 12:28, note the word “*wherefore / therefore.*” A deeper study of the entire twelfth chapter would be beneficial to understanding this passage.

Hebrews 13:1-4 – Let brotherly love continue. Exercise kindness, generosity, and hospitality. Prayerful compassion and concern should be exercised towards other believers who are suffering for Christ’s sake. Keep your love pure. Don’t let affections turn into lust, fornication, or adultery. Consider Ephesians 4:1-3, 17-32; 5:1-10; 6:18-20; I Timothy 5:1-2; I Peter 1:22.

Hebrews 13:5-6 – Let your life be without covetousness. Do not be controlled by the love of money. Focus on...

- Peace and contentment – (Philippians 4:4-13, 19)
- Reliance on God – (Psalm 56:1-13; 121:1-8)
- No fear, no worries, no fretting about man – (Psalm 37:1-11; II Thessalonians 3:1-5)

Hebrews 13:13 – Let us go forth, unto Him (Jesus), suffering reproach from the world.

Jesus' rejection by Israel is compared to the Old Testament sacrifices. The blood was offered in the Holy of Holies. But the bodies of the sacrificed animals were taken outside of the camp / outside the gate and burned (Hebrews 13:10-12). As Christ was rejected and given to the Romans for crucifixion, so we should be willing to be rejected, persecuted, even killed for being identified with Christ. Consider Hebrews 12:1-4; Matthew 10:32-40; 16:21-27; John 16:16-33; Galatians 1:3-4; 6:14; Philippians 3:12-15; Colossians 2:6-10; II Timothy 2:8-13; I John 3:1-3.

Hebrews 13:15-16 – Let us offer sacrifices to God.

Christ sacrificed Himself for us and gave us a ministry (II Corinthians 5:14-21). We have been made New Testament priests before God (I Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6). Therefore, we are to make offerings to God. Consider the ministry of prayer (I Timothy 2:1-8; Revelation 5:8 cp. Acts 13:2 (KJV, NKJV, NASB) *“As they ministered to / were serving the Lord...”* Many translations say *“they were worshipping the Lord...”* But this Greek word has the connotation of what a priest would do in ministry / service to the Lord).

- The sacrifice of praise and continual thanks – (Hebrews 13:15 cp. Jeremiah 17:26; Hosea 14:2)
- The sacrifice of good works – (Hebrews 13:16 (cp. 6:10); Romans 12:1-3; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:8; Revelation 14:13)

A word on submission to the ministry of God's word: Every priest that made sacrifices was required to keep themselves in line with God's Word. So, consider the emphasis we are given, as New Testament priests, concerning love, respect, and compliance, regarding the elders who teach God's word to us (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 22, 24).

Hebrews 13:15 – “By Him...let us offer”

Our sacrifices are not just **for** Christ, not just in obedience **to** Christ, but they are done **through** the work of Christ's Spirit that dwells in us. Without Him, we can do nothing. See John 15:4-5; Romans 15:18 (cp. I Corinthians 3:1-7); Philippians 1:11; 4:13; Galatians 2:20.

“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 well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20-21)