

Exhortations and Warnings ~ Part 1

Messianic Jews 13:1-6

Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, we wrapped up with the topic of the **Trust and the Believer** in **Messianic Jews 12** by exploring a **Final Warning Against Apostasy** in **Messianic Jews 12: 18-29**. In this post, we move on the final chapter of **Messianic Jews** where we study **General Messianic Obligations** in **Messianic Jews 13:1-6**.

¹ Let brotherly friendship continue; ² but don't forget to be friendly to outsiders; for in so doing, some people, without knowing it, have entertained angels. ³ Remember those in prison and being mistreated, as if you were in prison with them and undergoing their torture yourselves. ⁴ Marriage is honorable in every respect; and, in particular, sex within marriage is pure. But God will indeed punish fornicators and adulterers. ⁵ Keep your lives free from the love of money; and be satisfied with what you have; for God himself has said, "I will never fail you or abandon you." ⁶ Therefore, we say with confidence, "Adonai is my helper; I will not be afraid - what can a human being do to me?" ~ Messianic Jews 13:1-6 (CJB)

As he comes to the close of the letter, the writer to the **Messianic Jews** turns to practical things. Here he outlines five essential qualities of the Believer's life.

1. **Let brotherly friendship continue.** The very circumstances of the early Kehilah sometimes threatened brotherly love. The very fact that they took their religion as seriously as they did was in one sense a danger. In a Kehilah which is threatened from the outside and desperately in earnest on the inside, there are always two dangers. First, there is the danger of heresy-hunting. The very desire to keep the trust pure tends to make people eager to track down and eliminate the pagan and the person whose trust has gone astray. Second, there is the danger of stern and unsympathetic treatment of the person whose nerve and trust have failed. It is a great thing to keep the trust clean; but when the desire to do so makes us critical, harsh and unsympathetic, brotherly love is destroyed, and we are left with a situation which may be worse than the one we tried to avoid. Somehow or other we have to combine two things - an earnestness in the trust and kindness to the person who has strayed from it.
2. There is hospitality. **Some people, without knowing it, have entertained angels.** This matter-of-fact statement (like those of 1:5-2:16, 12:22) takes for granted that angels exist. Do they? Science cannot answer such a question, because science doesn't deal with metaphysics. Modern first-hand reports, of which there are many, are no more conclusive; since those inclined to disbelieve in angels explain them away and are not convinced. The writers and characters of the Bible considered angels real, reporting encounters with them as straightforwardly as we would describe driving off in a car; therefore, whoever can accept the Bible as God's revealed Word should have no difficulty acknowledging the reality of angels.
3. There is sympathy for those in trouble. **Remember those in prison and being mistreated.** It is here we see the early Kehilah at its best. It often happened that the Believer landed in jail and worse. It might be for their trust; it might be for debt, for the Believers were poor; it might be that pirates or brigands captured them. It was then that the Kehilah went into action. It was a renewal weekend where I heard other Believers visiting the prisons that I gave up and fully accepted all the Lord had for me. I thought the recent movie "Paul" depicted this quality excellently.
4. There is purity. **Marriage is honorable in every respect; and, in particular, sex within marriage is pure.** First, the marriage bond is to be universally respected. This may mean either of two almost opposite things. (a) Some ascetics despised marriage. Some even went the length of castrating themselves to secure what they thought was purity. (b) There were those who were ever liable to relapse into immorality. The writer to the Messianic Jews uses two words. The one denotes

adulterous living; the other denotes all kinds of impurity, such as unnatural vice. Into the world, the Believers brought a new ideal of purity. Even the heathen admitted that.

5. There is contentment. The Believers must be *free from the love of money*. We must be content with what we have, and why should we not be for we possess the continual presence of God? **Messianic Jews** quote two great passages - Joshua 1:5 and Psalms 118:6 - to show that Believers need nothing more because we have the presence and the help of God. Nothing that humanity can give us can improve on that.

Adonai is my helper; I will not be afraid.

In my next post, we explore the **Warnings** in **Messianic Jews 13:7-17**.