

**Hebrews 13****Lesson 13****Some Final And Practical Exhortations**

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**Outline****I. Some Personal Responsibilities (vv. 1-7)**

- A. *Brotherly love* (v. 1)
- B. *Hospitality* (v. 2)
- C. *Remember those in prison* (v. 3)
- D. *Faithfulness in marriage* (v. 4)
- E. *Contentment -vs- covetousness* (vv. 5-6)
- F. *Remember and follow leaders* (v. 7)

**II. Continue in the Service of Christ (vv. 8-16)**

- A. *Jesus is unchangeable* (v. 8)
- B. *Make a clear break from Judaism* (vv. 9-14)
  - 1. Don't be carried away by error (v. 9)
  - 2. Must leave "Jerusalem" to go to Christ (vv. 10-14)
- C. *The sacrifices we offer* (vv. 15-16)
  - 1. Continually (v. 15)
  - 2. We offer: (vv. 15-16)
    - a. Praise (v. 15)
    - b. Doing good (v. 16)
    - c. Sharing (v. 16)
  - 3. God is well pleased (v. 16)

**III. Duties toward Elders and Other Servants (vv. 17-19)**

- A. *Obey and submit to elders* (v. 17)
- B. *Pray for Paul and others* (vv. 18-19)

**IV. Prayer for the Hebrews that They May be Complete Doing God's Will (vv. 20-21)****V. Final Remarks (vv. 22-25)**

- A. *Heed exhortations* (v. 22)
- B. *Timothy is set free* (v. 23)
- C. *Salutations to the Hebrews from those in Italy* (v. 24)
- D. *Grace unto them* (v. 25)

## Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter

### Hebrews 13:3

Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

This last chapter deals with some final and practical points of putting faith into practice. Rather than being an appendix to the book it serves as more of a summary of the book.

### Some Personal Responsibilities (vv. 1-7)

*Brotherly love*<sup>1</sup> (v. 1). This is not a general love that we are to have for all men, rather “the peculiar love of Christians to each other as brethren.”<sup>2</sup> In the midst of persecution some might have the tendency to let their love decline, thus becoming indifferent toward brethren. The writer is not suggesting that this has already happened, but merely warning that it should continue. This love will be demonstrated in showing hospitality (v. 2), remembering those in prison (v. 3), and remembering those who are mistreated (v. 3).

*Hospitality* (v. 2). “Entertain strangers” is translated “hospitality” in the ESV and in Romans 12:13. There would be Christians traveling from one place to another to preach or because of the pressure of persecution (cf. Acts 8:1-4) who would need a place to stay. The writer adds that some who did so unknowingly entertained angels (Gen. 18:1-2; 19:1). The point is that at the time, Abraham did not know these men were angels. Likewise, we may show hospitality toward some without knowing the great blessing we will receive. “The influence of such guests in a family is worth more than it costs to entertain them.”<sup>3</sup>

*Remember those in prison* (v. 3). Though others may be included, the context would point to those who are in prison because of persecution. It is possible that some felt it dangerous to be identified with those in prison lest they too be mistreated. One should consider himself as if he is in prison with them. Additionally those who are mistreated should be remembered.<sup>4</sup> This should be done in view of the fact that you are in the body also. That is, since you are still alive you may become the subject of such suffering as well.

*Faithfulness in marriage* (v. 4). Marriage is honorable<sup>5</sup> and the bed (sexual relationship within the marriage) is pure. Yet, fornication (sexual union before marriage) and adultery (sexual union outside of marriage) God will condemn. Here and in the next two verses the author addresses two areas where focus on earthly pleasures could pull one away from God.

1 From the Greek word *philadelphia*.

2 H.D.M. Spence-Jones, (Ed.). Hebrews, 393. *Pulpit Commentary*. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

3 Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Hebrews*. (R. Frew, Ed.), 314. London: Blackie & Son.

4 Probably refers to those who are mistreated through persecution, though not imprisoned.

5 Lenki and other writers suggest that the writer is defending marriage against the false asceticism that considered the marriage bed (sexual union) defiling and filthy.

*Contentment -vs- covetousness* (vv. 5-6). The ESV translates this “Keep your life free from the love of money...” (cf. ASV). Under persecution some Christians suffered the loss of possessions (cf. 10:34). One whose love for the material causes him to cling to his earthly things may have a real struggle under persecution. The child of God should be content (“satisfied with what you have”, NCV) for God has promised not to leave or forsake.<sup>6</sup> We may lose possessions, but we still have what is important. Since that is true, we can say the Lord is our helper and we don’t fear what man can do (v. 6).<sup>7</sup> Man can take away our material goods, but the Lord is ever with us.

*Remember and follow leaders* (v. 7). Those who rule over you (“leaders”, ESV) would certainly include elders (cf. vv. 17, 24), but would seem to embrace more. This probably refers to leaders who have passed on before.<sup>8</sup> Remember what they taught from the word and follow their example knowing the end result.<sup>9</sup>

### **Continue in the Service of Christ (vv. 8-16)**

The point in these verses is to press on in the service of God and not turn back to Judaism. They serve well as a summary of what the whole book is about.

*Jesus is unchangeable* (v. 8). In contrast to the changing leadership in the church (as one generation passes on), Jesus never changes. There is no reason to leave Christ since nothing has changed.

*Make a clear break from Judaism* (vv. 9-14). This unit of verses simply urges the Hebrews to make a clear break from Judaism and thus continue to serve Christ. They should not allow the strange doctrines (such as Judaism) to lead them astray (v. 9). One’s relationship to God is established by grace (that provided the sacrifice of Christ) instead of the foods (standing for regulations of the Old Testament law). The later did not profit (bring salvation) to those who kept those laws.

The next five verses say one must leave “Jerusalem” (Judaism) to go to Christ (vv. 10-14). The altar (sacrifice) of Christ cannot benefit those who serve the tabernacle, that is, those under Judaism (v. 10). The reason is given in the verses that follow. Under the Old Testament the bodies of the sacrificed animals were burned outside of the camp (v 11).<sup>10</sup> Likewise Jesus suffered the cross outside the gate (v. 12). Thus, one who wants to benefit from the sacrifice of Christ must go outside the camp (leave “Jerusalem” or Judaism) accepting the reproach (suffering) that goes with it (v. 13). Jerusalem (and Judaism) is not a continuing

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6 Taken from Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:5, and 1 Chronicles 28:20.

7 Taken from Psalm 27:1, and 118:6.

8 In contrast to the unchanging Christ (v. 8).

9 We learn something very practical about being a leader from this verse. They lead by the teaching of the word and by a great example. If you want to be a leader (whether you are ever an elder, preacher or teacher), fill your heart with the word and be a positive example.

10 “In the case of many Jewish sacrifices, portions of the animals offered in sacrifice were later eaten by the priests (Leviticus 4:22-35, 6:25-26). But the flesh of any sin offering whose blood was carried into the Holy of Holies by the high priest on the Day of Atonement was not to be eaten. Instead it was to be carried outside the camp and there entirely consumed by fire (Leviticus 16:27)” (Gareth L. Reese, *Hebrews*, 240).

(abiding, ASV) city, but we seek such a city to come (v. 14). Jerusalem would be destroyed in just a few short years after this epistle was written.<sup>11</sup>

*The sacrifices we offer* (vv. 15-16). In the service of Christ we are to continually offer sacrifices to God (v. 15). Three sacrifices<sup>12</sup> are listed in these two verses: praise (v. 15), doing good (v. 16), and sharing<sup>13</sup> (v. 16). God is well pleased with such sacrifices (v. 16).

### **Duties toward Elders and Other Servants (vv. 17-19)**

*Obey and submit to elders* (v. 17). Those who rule over you would be the elders of the local church who have oversight (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). The members have the responsibility to submit to the elder's lead. The reason given is that elders are watching for their souls, recognizing they will give an account for their work. We should be respectful and cooperative with the elders so that their work is that of joy and not grief.

*Pray for Paul and others* (vv. 18-19). The writer (whom we think to be Paul) urged the readers to pray for him and his companions. Even though his rebuke has been strong, he reminds them they should pray for him because all he has done has been with a pure conscience (v. 18). He asked that they pray that he may be able to be with them soon (v. 19). Their prayer should be that any obstacle to his being with them be removed.

### **Prayer for the Hebrews that They May be Complete Doing God's Will (vv. 20-21)**

The author now shares the prayer he offers for the Hebrews. His prayer is that God, who raised Jesus from the dead and made him the great Shepherd of the sheep (through the blood of the covenant)<sup>14</sup>, would make them complete.<sup>15</sup> Being complete, they would be doing God's will (v. 21). The New Covenant is here called the everlasting or eternal covenant (v. 21).

### **Final Remarks (vv. 22-25)**

Verse 21 is the actual end of the letter. The author adds some personal and final remarks.

*Heed exhortations* (v. 22). The writer urges them to bear patiently with the exhortation he has written giving heed to the warnings that he has written in few words.<sup>16</sup>

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11 The principle would certainly apply beyond Jerusalem. The world we live in is not continuing or abiding. Rather we are seeking such a city.

12 We must do more than serve God with our lips, we must honor him with our actions and possessions.

13 Sharing with others what we have – benevolence.

14 Commentators differ over whether the phrase "through the blood of the everlasting covenant" qualifies Jesus being brought up from the dead and made the great Shepherd (v. 20) or "make you complete" (v. 21). While it could apply to either, it seems to refer to being raised and made the great Shepherd because the blood he shed was the means by which the New Covenant was ratified.

15 The word translated complete is used of "mending" the nets (Matt. 4:21) and "perfect" what is lacking (1 Thess. 3:10). This reminded them that there is some growing and maturing needed (cf. Heb. 5:11-14; 6).

16 The subjects dealt with in this book could be developed more fully.

*Timothy is set free* (v. 23). At some point Timothy had been in prison and is now set free. The author hopes to see him.

*Salutations to the Hebrews from those in Italy* (v. 24). Greetings are sent from the author to the elders and all the saints. Brethren from Italy send greetings as well.

*Grace unto them* (v. 25). The book closes with a desire for God's grace to be upon them.

<b>Use of the Old Testament in this Chapter</b>	
Verse in Chapter 13	Old Testament Reference
v. 5	Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:5; 1 Chron. 28:20
v. 6	Psalms 27:1; 118:6

## Questions

1. In the context, what are some ways brotherly love can be shown?
2. What can be learned from Abraham entertaining angels, though at the time he was unaware (v.2)?
3. How does remembering those in prison relate to the context?
4. What does verse 4 teach us about the sexual relationship?
5. How does one learn to be content (v. 5)?
6. What practical lesson about leadership do you learn from verse 7?
7. What is the point about Christ being unchangeable (v. 8)?
8. How can we let the elders do their work with joy and not grief (v. 17)?
9. What was the writer's prayer for the Hebrews?
10. What has impressed you most about the book of Hebrews?