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By Dan Maines

## Hebrews 13

### Hebrews 13:1

Let love of the brothers and sisters continue.

† The writer begins the conclusion with love. Brotherly love is the mark of the new covenant community.

† Jesus said, "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

## **Hebrews 13:2**

Do not neglect hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

† Hospitality was central in the ancient world, where travelers depended on the kindness of others. Abraham and Lot hosted angels without knowing it (Genesis 18–19).

† Philo, *On Abraham* 107, praised Abraham's hospitality as a model of righteousness.

## **Hebrews 13:3**

Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are badly treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

† The church faced real persecution. They were to identify with suffering believers, remembering they themselves shared one body in Christ.

† Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44, records how Christians were imprisoned and mistreated under Nero.

## **Hebrews 13:4**

Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.

† Sexual immorality was rampant in the Roman world. The church was to honor marriage as sacred, unlike the surrounding culture.

† Josephus, *Against Apion* 2.199, contrasted Jewish marital faithfulness with Gentile immorality.

## **Hebrews 13:5-6**

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have, for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you," so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What

will man do to me?"

† Contentment flows from trust in God's presence. Fear of loss and greed are answered by His promise never to abandon His people.

† Seneca, Letters 9.18, said the wise man is content with little. Hebrews grounds contentment in God's faithfulness.

### **Hebrews 13:7**

Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you, and considering the result of their way of life, imitate their faith.

† The community was called to remember faithful leaders who had already passed on. Their lives bore witness to the truth of their message.

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 44, reminded believers to honor and imitate faithful leaders.

### **Hebrews 13:8**

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever.

† Unlike leaders who pass away, Christ remains unchanged and eternal. His faithfulness guarantees the church's stability.

### **Hebrews 13:9**

Do not be misled by varied and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

† Strange teachings likely included Jewish dietary regulations. Grace, not food laws, strengthens the heart.

† Mishnah Hullin 1.1 records debates over food laws. Hebrews says these cannot benefit.

### **Hebrews 13:10**

We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle

have no right to eat.

† The true altar is Christ. Those clinging to the old tabernacle have no share in Him.

† Ignatius, Letter to the Magnesians 7, said Christians have a new altar, Christ Himself.

### **Hebrews 13:11-12**

For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood.

† Jesus' crucifixion outside Jerusalem fulfilled the type of the sin offering burned outside the camp. His suffering brings true sanctification.

† Josephus, Wars 5.449, describes executions outside Jerusalem's walls, paralleling Christ's death outside the gate.

### **Hebrews 13:13-14**

So then, let's go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

† To follow Christ means leaving the security of the old system and bearing His reproach. The earthly Jerusalem was about to fall, but the heavenly city endures.

† Revelation 21 shows the fulfillment, the heavenly Jerusalem as the true city.

### **Hebrews 13:15-16**

Through Him then, let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

† In place of temple sacrifices, the new covenant calls for continual praise and practical acts of love. These are the sacrifices God desires.

† Hosea 14:2 spoke of offering "the fruit of lips" instead of bulls. Hebrews shows this prophecy fulfilled.

### **Hebrews 13:17**

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they may do this with joy and not groaning, for this would be unhelpful for you.

† Leaders bore responsibility before God for the flock. Believers were to obey willingly, not resist, so that leadership could be joyful.

### **Hebrews 13:18-19**

Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things. And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you more quickly.

† The writer appeals personally for prayer, showing humility and dependence on the body of Christ.

### **Hebrews 13:20-21**

Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, that is, Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

† This benediction sums up the letter: Christ is the Shepherd, His covenant is eternal, and God equips His people to live for His glory.

## **Hebrews 13:22-25**

But I urge you, brothers and sisters, listen patiently to this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. Know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you. Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be with you all.

† The letter closes with personal greetings and encouragement. Timothy's release suggests these were real circumstances in the first century, grounding the letter in its time.

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.4, confirmed the early church accepted Hebrews as apostolic, tied to Paul's circle.

## **Application for us today**

† Love, hospitality, marriage, contentment, and obedience remain marks of the covenant community.

† Christ is the same forever, our true altar, our outside-the-gate Redeemer, and our eternal Shepherd.

† We live not for the earthly city, but for the heavenly one, the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

## **† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

### Source Index

† Genesis 18–19 - Abraham and Lot host angels

† Proverbs 3:11–12 - discipline of the Lord

† Hosea 14:2 - sacrifice of lips instead of bulls

† Revelation 21 - heavenly Jerusalem

† Philo, On Abraham 107 - hospitality as virtue

† Philo, On the Special Laws 2.63 - athletic metaphors of virtue

† Josephus, Against Apion 2.199 - marriage and morality

† Josephus, Wars 5.449 - executions outside the city

† Mishnah Hullin 1.1 - debates over food laws

† Tacitus, Annals 15.44 - persecution under Nero

† Seneca, Letters 9.18 - contentment with little

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 44 - honoring faithful leaders  
† Ignatius, Letter to the Magnesians 7 - Christ as new altar  
† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.4 - early church acceptance of Hebrews

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