

Hebrews: Chapter 13

Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

- brotherly love- Thayer: “the love which Christians cherish for each other as ‘brethren’”. The writer, with a reference to what he believed already existed, is encouraging this love to continue, since the persecution they were suffering for the faith just might deter it. He is here recalling what Jesus said would happen right before the end of the sacrificial system and the fall of Jerusalem.

Mat 24:12 And because lawlessness will be increased, **the love of many will grow cold.** 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this Gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (*emp. added*)

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Heb 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

- Not that such would be probable, or even possible today, but that there were those who once entertained angels unawares like Abraham in Gen 18. The idea is that anyone who needed such basic necessities as food, clothing and shelter were to be considered on the same level as if *messengers* from God and thus would demonstrate their love as brethren.
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- entertain strangers- Gk.5381- *hospitableness*: -hospitality. Christians aren't to welcome complete strangers into their homes since we that might prove to be dangerous. The focus here is to be hospitable since the word “strangers” isn't in the Interlinear which reads “of hospitality not be forgetful”.

Jas 2:15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

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Heb 13:3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

- them that are in bonds- These were not there “as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler” (*1 Pet 4:15*) since God encourages punishment to fit the crime for those who “do wrong” (*Rom 13:4*). This was for “those who suffer according to God’s will” who “entrust their souls to a faithful Creator” for “doing good” (*v. 19*), these are the ones to be *recalled*. Their empathy for such was to be as bound with them, thus identifying with them as though in the same state (*Rev 1:9*). If another’s son, for instance, was in prison because of the faith or for something he didn’t do, the way his parents felt was to be in the same manner that others in the body (*church*) were to feel, even if it wasn’t their own son.
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- suffer adversity- As others suffer for the faith there was a potential that all members of the church might suffer for the same reason. (*Rev 2:13*)

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Heb 13:4 Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

- The Essenes were a sect that was in existence from about two centuries before Christ and into the first century afterward according to Encyclopedia Britannica. Even though the Bible says nothing about them in the N.T., more than likely their doctrines were known publicly. The writer here may have referenced such as it applied to marriage among the saints at Jerusalem. There was nothing un-holy about scriptural marriage between a man and woman and because of that, what they did between themselves sexually was to be held as *unsoiled*.

1Co 7:5 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

- But the opposite would be true, and God would *condemn* it, if there were any who practiced (male) *prostitution* or defiled such a relationship through adultery (*Mat 5:27-32*).

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Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

- During any calamity, perceived or otherwise, there would be a tendency to hoard things to be prepared for the worse, even to the point of obtaining such through greed. If that were the case, these brethren could become stingy when it came to hospitality in taking care of other's needs above their own. There is nothing wrong with being prepared where it concerns our families (*1 Tim 5:8*). Here the writer admonished the Jerusalem church beforehand to "not be anxious about anything" (*Php 4:6*) but to be content with such things that they had and God would take care of whatever they were lacking in. (*Ex 16*)

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Heb 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

- Rhetorically speaking, the writer quotes *Psa 27:1* and *118:6*.

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Heb 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.

- rule- The context here is with reference to teachers, whereas in verse 17 it refers to elders. Context always determines interpretation. If these teachers' *behavior* accorded with what they taught, then they were to imitate their conversation.

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Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

- Even though leaders might change their beliefs and thus their behavior, Christ is forever consistent and ultimately to be emulated over all others.

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Heb 13:9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

- Jesus stated in His warning to His inner circle that “many false prophets [would] arise and lead many astray” (*Mat 24:11*). In verse 24 He warned them that “false christs and false prophets [would] arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, **even the elect.**” (*emp. added*) The writer here is reiterating those words as part of having them recall all that has been passed down to them concerning the end of the age.

- The apostle John dealt with certain false teachings that were being circulated before the end of the Mosaic economy that could cause trouble to the elect, especially to the gullible and even to those who were strong in the faith.

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit (*Gk.4151*), but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

- The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy about the same familiar warning regarding the end of the Mosaic Dispensation. This included the Levitical laws on clean and unclean meats (*food*). Those who were occupied therein as tradition, even after having converted to Christ, would soon find that such had not profited them. And to impose such as doctrine on others, as the Judaizes did to the Galatians, would bring God’s wrath (*2 Thes 1:8*).

1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in **later times** some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful (*Gk.4108- an imposter or misleader*) spirits (*Gk.4151- vital principle*) and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared (*Gk.2743- to brand [“cauterize”], that is, [by implication] to render insensitive [figuratively]*), 3 who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (*emp. added*)

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Heb 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

- The altar here is with reference to the cross and those “which serve the tabernacle” is referring to the Levitical priests under the O.T. priesthood. Under the Mosaic only Levite priests were to partake of the sacrificed animal (*Lev 6:25-26; Num 18:9-10*). Of the N.T. tent (*i.e., the church*) only N.T. priests (*i.e., Christians- 1 Pet 2:9*), those who accept the invitation, are to partake (*Mat 22:13*). The writer is stating this here in the attempt to dissuade these saints from giving in to persecution and returning to a system that was “becoming obsolete and growing old [and was at that time] ready to vanish away” (*8:13*).

Joh 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.” 52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” 53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread that came down from Heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”

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Heb 13:11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

- Referring to the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies (9:7) with the blood of the sacrifice that atoned for his and the peoples' sin. Jesus, as the great High Priest (4:14- "Who knew no sin"- 2 Cor 5:21), "entered once for all... but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (9:12).

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- without the camp- See Lev 4:12; 21. On the Day of Atonement these animals, once their blood was brought into the Holy of Holies (Lev 16:27), were burned to ashes beyond the camp, wherever the Israelite nation was set throughout the wilderness wanderings. That practice continued once the temple was built inside Jerusalem with the flesh of the animal being taken beyond the gate to a specific area to be burned.

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Heb 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.

- As High Priest, Jesus not only offered the blood of the sacrifice (*His own*- 9:18) but also the body of the sacrificial animal (*His body as a Lamb without spot*- 1 Pet 1:19) on THE Day of Atonement. The fact that He also suffered without (outside) the gate is symbolic of His crucifixion on Golgotha (Mat 27:33).

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Heb 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

Joh 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know Him Who sent Me.

Rom 6:5 For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- To go forth therefore unto Him without the camp the writer was telling these Jewish saints to no longer be identified with the O.T. sacrificial system (1 Cor 10:2) but to bear His reproach, and identify with the New Covenant in His blood (Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25) since they had "been crucified with Christ" (Rom 6) through the N.T. ordinance of baptism.

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Heb 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

- In staying with the context of this writing, the writer here understands these Christian Jew's affinity for the city of Jerusalem and was attempting to help them realize it was only a physical piece of property. They may have been having a hard time believing that the city that God had lifted above all others to build the Temple in would be brought down by the encroaching Roman army. But those of the ancients understood this (11:10);

13-14) and embraced the idea of the true eternal city that is yet to come, Heaven. In this context the city isn't the same one as in Rev 21 (*the church*).

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Heb 13:15 By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to His name.

- Now that we have a new yet an eternal High Priest through Whom we can approach the throne of grace, along with a new Law (7:12), there is now a change in the type of worship that is commanded. No longer is it of “the blood of bulls and goats” (10:4) but of the sacrifice of praise to God. Animal sacrifices will not exist in Heaven for the redeemed but the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to His name would last into eternity.

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Heb 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

- These Jewish saints living in Jerusalem were suffering because of no longer being welcomed in the market place. Many were let go from their employers because of the faith. It would have been up to their fellow Christians (*the church whether Jew or Gentile- 2 Cor 8:4*) to take care of their needs. Such was to sacrifice what they had stored up for themselves and their families' needs but when sacrificing it for the brethren, God is well pleased. In Deut 31:6 Moses said, “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God Who goes before you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” Such still applied to His faithful saints in Jerusalem at that time (*v. 5*). This we understand is the faith which included works (*Jas 2*).

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Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

- In this context (*as opposed to verse 7*), them that have rule over you here are the ones that watch (*Gk.69- to be sleepless, that is, keep awake*) for your souls. These are the ‘overseers’ who “must hold firm the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (*Tit 1:9*). To obey them as they obey “the trustworthy word as taught” would be to their spiritual advantage in that to be qualified for that office there are certain requirements necessary to be spiritual leaders over their “charge” (*1 Pet 5:3*).

- give account- Not only will these men have to give accounts for themselves, this is one group that will be held accountable for how they oversaw the work of the Lord's bride and each member under their charge. It also has to do with their teaching sound doctrine, their influence and their protection of the flock against “the schemes of the devil” (*Eph 6:11*).

- with joy- The work of anyone in a supervisory position is a manifestation of his or her own job satisfaction. If those under them are disruptive and rebellious it would make their jobs more difficult and production would suffer for it. And if production suffers so would profit which in turn would influence paychecks. Nobody wins. Supporting those in such positions, then, only aids to the overall contentment of everyone.

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Heb 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. 19 But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

- These two verses may be evidence as to the author of this epistle. Paul had at other occasions solicited the prayers of the saints as in Eph 6:18-19 and 1 Thes 5:25. He was more than likely in prison and was expecting soon to be released, if the Lord willed it, and return to Jerusalem with Timothy to see them (*v. 23*) before 70 AD.

- good conscience- This was something the writer received at his obedience to the ordinance of baptism (*1 Pet 3:21 and possibly Act 22:16*). His assurance of such is the basis of the desire for their prayers. As Paul admitted his fallibility (*2 Cor 12:7*), here the writer admits to the idea there was a possibility that he also might fail to live honestly which would weaken their trust in his warnings. Whether perceived or otherwise, his desire was to “abstain from [even the] appearance of evil” (*1 Thes 5:22*). See also Romans 7.

- His main plea for their supplications was to be restored to [them] the sooner. Whatever this may mean, the writer was at some distance from Jerusalem, as the context of verse 24 will show.

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Heb 13:20 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,

- Paul also wrote to the Thessalonian brethren this same benediction (*1 Thes 5:23*). Jesus said, “blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God” (*Mat 5:9*). He also said His peace was not as the world would give them (*Jn 14:27*) as He made peace between Jew and Gentile (*Eph 2:15*) “by the blood of His cross” (*Col 1:20*). The context though shows the God here is referring to the Father Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus (*Act 2:32; 1 Cor 15:15*). The word peace (*reconciliation*) here is with reference to that which is between God and man since outside the bride of Christ it doesn’t exist. It is only through the resurrection of Christ that we can stand before God with a clear conscience (*1 Pet 3:21*) “by the washing of water with the word” (*Eph 5:26*).

Tit 3:4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing (*baptism*) of regeneration and renewal (*rebirth*) of the Holy Spirit, 6 Whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- Great Shepherd of the sheep- Knowing firsthand how gullible sheep are (*my Dad raised sheep for a while on his farm*) I can attest to the fact that sheep really need to be shepherded. Sheep are used as metaphors to show how we, as Christians, are in need of the Great Shepherd. He is the protective Pastor of the flock (*the church His bride*) which He obtained through the blood of the everlasting Covenant as her dowry or ransom (*Mk 10:45*).

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Heb 13:21 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.

- perfect- Gk.2675- *to complete thoroughly*, that is, *repair* (literally or figuratively) or *adjust*. The writer here is asking God to ready these saints to do that which is well pleasing in His sight, in this case, be ready and able to take care of each other’s needs before, during and after the fall and to not give in to conflicts within or to their

persecutors' demands. It was through their Advocate (*1 Jn 2:1*) Who is to receive honor, praise and worship forever and ever, that this was only possible, affirming this with Amen.

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Heb 13:22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

- The writer was here *imploring* these fellow brethren to *put up* with what was *said* as an *admonition* and *encouragement* for their own safety from what was coming (*see also 2 Cor 11:1, 19*). The writer knew of the immense hardships they were enduring for the sake of the Gospel (*Mk 8:35; 10:29; 1 Cor 9:23*) and this letter only touched on it in few words in comparison. He didn't want to put more on their plates than they could handle.

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Heb 13:23 Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

- Timothy having been set at liberty here (*according to the context and original language, Timothy may have been in prison*) may give another hint as to this epistle's author, along with the next verse as it reveals the writer's location. Timothy was often with Paul during the writing of the 'prison epistles' and may have been a prisoner himself during some of that time (*possibly at another location since the writer was hoping for him to come "soon"*). If the writer was imprisoned for preaching the truth of the Gospel and Timothy was Paul's "fellow worker" (*Rom 16:21*) then it can be concluded that he too suffered imprisonment from time to time.

- Paul had often sent Timothy to Gentile congregations such as in 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10 and Php 2:19. Here, as he did in Act 16 when he circumcised Timothy "because of the Jews", Paul wanted to visit the Hebrew saints at Jerusalem along with Timothy escorting him. But time would be running out and the only hope of visiting them would be if he [came] shortly to get Paul and take him along. But that also depended on the length of Paul's incarceration (*v. 19*).

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Heb 13:24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

- all them that have rule over you- Context here concludes that both those leaders of verses 7 and 17 be included as well as others who were in positions of leadership such as deacons, etc., including all the saints to whom this warning was addressed. At this time, sainthood was understood as a condition belonging to all who professed Christ and were obedient to the Gospel and not a title to be earned via supposed miraculous interventions once in the afterlife.

- Paul's desire was to visit the congregation at Rome (*Rom 1:10-12*) but it wasn't granted in the way he would have liked. If the writer here is Paul (*which this writer is now near certain that it is*) and this was another of his 'prison epistles', then it shows his affinity toward his "kinsmen according to the flesh" (*Rom 9:3*), but now also as his brethren "according to the Spirit" (*Rom 8:5*), who were living in Jerusalem.

- They of Italy- These were Christians living in Rome that were seeing to his every need as did Timothy (*2 Tim 4:13*) and possibly Luke who recorded the Acts of the apostles (*Lk*

1:3; Act 1:1). No matter where on earth a Christian is living, we are all part of the family of God and are to take care of others in need as we have been blessed.

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Heb 13:25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

- Grace- Here that God's favor be with you all. They were already suffering persecution at the hands of their Hebrew kinsmen but had yet to feel the full impact of the encroaching Roman army and they needed all the encouragement they could get. The end is affirmed with amen (*Gk.281- so be it*).

Worksheet

Hebrews: Chapter 13

1. Define "brotherly love".
2. What was the writer's intent in adding "for thereby some have entertained angels unawares".
3. How were these Hebrew brethren to empathize with their fellow Christians?
4. Explain why the writer may have included "the marriage bed" in his closing statements.
5. Why were these saints encouraged to live lives "free from love of money"?
6. Who are the "leaders" in the context of verse 7?
7. What does it mean to be "strengthened by grace, not by foods".
8. What is the "altar" of verse 10 referring to, who are those that have the "right to eat" of it, and why couldn't those others partake of it?
9. How does Jesus' body compare to those of the "animals whose blood" was "brought into the holy places" on the Day of Atonement?
10. What did it mean to go "outside the camp and bear the reproach He endured"?
11. What was the "lasting city" these saints were looking for?
12. Explain the difference between Old and New Testament sacrificial systems.
13. According to verse 16, what is another sacrifice these Hebrew saints were to perform?
14. Who are the leaders of verse 17 as opposed to those of verse 7?
15. Why did the writer desire "to act honorable in all things"?
16. How does verse 19 give a possible clue as to the author of the Hebrew letter?
17. Explain the context in which "peace" is used in verse 20.
18. What did the writer mean in the phrase "equip you with everything good"?
19. Explain what the writer meant to "bear with my word of exhortation" because it was written "briefly".
20. How does naming Timothy help in possibly identifying the author of this epistle?
21. Who are "all the saints" this letter was written to?
22. Who are those "from Italy" referring to?

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