

HEBREWS 13

HPC Trinity Class
April 19, 2026



The beginning of the Book of Hebrews' final chapter seems to be a rambling catch-all by our mysterious writer, consisting of hopes and expectations for his new Christian friends. And although his letter is some 20 centuries old, we discover his desires continue to ring true for us today.

v. 1--*Keep loving one another.* (Literally, "Let brotherly love continue.")

- Love is the cornerstone of Christian ethics.
 - [READ MARK 12:28-31]
 - "teachers of the law" = Scribes, who were often Pharisees, also.¹

v. 2--*Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers.*

- The Greek word for "entertain" means to show hospitality. Commercial inns were uncommon. Most faithful Jews would remember the hospitality shown by Abraham (Gen. 18), [READ GENESIS 18:1-5]
 - ...or that which was shown by Gideon (Judg. 6),... or to Manoah's barren wife (Judg. 13).² In other words, hospitality to strangers—not simply to friends and family-- was not a foreign concept to Jews of this era.

- This concept of being hospitable to strangers was highly esteemed in both the Hellenistic world and in Jewish tradition. Even Jesus emphasizes this in Matthew 25:35f.

v. 3--*Remember those in prison.*

[READ HEBREWS 13:3]

- Don't simply be sympathetic; picture yourself as a prisoner. The NIV puts it well by telling us to show the same concern and kindness "as if you yourselves were suffering."
- "As a legal punishment imprisonment is not found in ancient law and does not appear in the



Paul's prison cell in Rome



¹ Of the 19 references to "scribes" in Mark, this is the only positive one.

² FYI—Israelite customs frowned upon women engaging in conversations with male strangers. Thus, Manoah's unnamed wife has her husband speak with the angel. (Judg. 13:11-21)

Bible until the Persian period,³ which would begin @550 B.C. Not until the book of Ezra (7:26) do we first find mention of prisons being in the holy land.

v. 4--*Honor the marriage bed.*

We are to be faithful to our marriage partner. No excuses. God will be our judge. The apostle Paul had the same attitude toward faithfulness in marriage, as displayed in his letters to the Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians.



v. 5f--*Avoid the love of **money**.* [READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:10]

“Let your conversation be without covetousness” is the wording still found in the older KJV.⁴

- Money itself isn't bad; it's the **love** of money that is bad. Be content with what you have. Why? Because God will never leave you.
- This attitude towards money is similar to that of another group which was popular in Jesus' time: the Stoics.



- The final sentence on this topic is a simple question from Psalm 118: “What can man do to me?” With God as our guide and goal, nothing else compares.

v. 7—*Remember your leaders.*

Here the author is referring to those who had come before, such as Paul. (The current leaders are given a nod in v. 17.) Praise goes to those who were brave enough to step forward, giving their lives and souls to God. They knew that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (v.8) .

vs. 9-16---*Cerimonial foods* were considered by many ancient peoples to be a kind of gateway into the world of the gods. By eating and drinking certain things in a prescribed

³ *Interpreter's* vol. 3, p. 891,

⁴ “Free from the love of money.” In English this phrase contains six words; in Greek it is only one word: *aphilargyros*. Surprisingly, this word is found only one other time in the New Testament, in 1 Timothy 3:3.

manor, one expected to be welcomed into God's (or a god's) presence and attain his knowledge.⁵ Because he describes these dietary doctrines as being "strange," however, we should probably not link Judaism with this group.—our readers would have

been quite familiar with Jewish traditions, and would not consider them as being "strange."



In vs. 11-14 our author even implies that the Jewish rites of animal sacrifice are no better than those of the pagan worshipers. The animals' blood is offered up to God, but the carcasses are kicked away outside of the camp...similar to the disgraceful discarding of our Lord's body at the cross.

[READ HEBREWS 13:11-16]

v. 20f—a final, beautiful prayer, asking that Jesus be with his readers as they strive to please him--

--and to be one with him—

--each day.

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⁵ "Gnōsis" (Gk) = "knowledge," from which we get the word "Gnosticism."