

**The Book Of Hebrews**  
**Part III**  
**Practical Application Of Doctrine To Life (10:19-13:25)**  
**Lesson 12: (12:1-28)**

**Outline thus far.**

Part I - Jesus, The Incarnate Son Of God (1:1-4:13).

I. God's Final Word Spoken Through His Son (1:1-2:4).

II. The Need For The Incarnation Explained (2:5-18).

III. First Digression - Exhortation To "Hold Fast" And Warning Against Unbelief (3:1-4:13).

Part II - Jesus, Our Great High Priest (4:14-10:18).

I. Jesus Qualified For Priesthood (4:14-5:11).

II. Second Digression - Warning Against Apostasy And Encouragement To Perfection (5:12-6:20).

III. Jesus A High Priest After The Order Of Melchizedek (7:1-28).

IV. "A Ministry More Excellent" (8:1-10:18).

Part III - Practical Application Of Doctrine To Life (10:19-13:25).

I. The Impact This Teaching Is To Have (10:19-39).

II. Illustrations Of The Power Of Faith (11:1-40).

III. Exhortation Resumed (from Chapter 10), With Climactic Conclusion Reached in 12.

A. Hortatory inference drawn from the illustrations of faith (12:1-4).

B. The mature view of affliction (12:5-13).

C. The pursuit of holiness (12:14-17).

III. Spiritual Realities Of The New Age Reinforcing The Call For Holiness (12:18-29).

A. A contrast made with the revelation of God at Sinai (12:18-21).

B. The superior position of Christians (12:22-24).

C. Practical conclusion from the contrast (12:25-29).

**IV Exhortations Concerning Various Duties (13:1-25).****A. Forget not to show love (13:1-3).**

*"Let brotherly love continue" (1).*

Evidently a characteristic in which they were not backward but one they were urged to maintain (Rom 12:10; 1 Thes 4:9; 1 Pe 1:22).

*"Do not forget to entertain strangers (philoxenia)" (2).*

1. The admonition is re-enforced by stating that in doing this some had shown hospitality to angels unawares. Abraham and Lot are two individuals who may have done this though the extent of their knowledge at the time is unclear (Gen 18:1-15; 19:1-22).

2. Philoxenia means "love of strangers" (Vine). With this definition in mind, what is the difference between entertaining and showing hospitality?

Thought questions

1. Is this admonition restricted to strangers (1 Pe 4:8-10)?

2. In practical terms what can we do to carry out this admonition? Where might there be a greater responsibility (3 Jn 5-8)?

3. Can all do this?
4. Are there some practical considerations that would make offering such hospitality unwise?
5. What mind-set must we avoid (1 Tim 5:8-16, esp. 16)?

*Remember those in bonds... (3; 10:32-34).*

### **B. Warnings concerning misplaced and/or perverted love (13:4-6).**

*The honourable position of marriage (4).*

The state of marriage is to be respected by all and the relationship undefiled by extra-matrimonial relationships (4a).

Those who violate this relationship will be judged by God (4b).

*The love of things (5-6).*

The way to avoid covetousness (a). Be content with those things already possessed. That which will enable a person to escape the love of money and learn contentment is to rely on God and trust His promise that He will never desert His people (b; cf. Dt 31:6; Josh 1:5; 1 Chr 28:20).

1. This commitment to His people was matched by His requirement that the Israelites also be faithful to Him (Dt 4:24; 9:3).
2. The Hebrew Christians had already manifested a trust in God and a readiness to place the provision of their material needs in His care (6:10; 10:34).
3. Love between brethren would be particularly important in view of the hostility of those outside the Christian community (10:32-34; 12:1-13).

What God has said provides the basis for courage in the face of intimidation and hardship (6; Psa 118:6; 56:4).

### **C. Remember former leaders and teachers (13:7-9; cf. 2:3).**

*The call to remember (7).*

Three points characterised these men: They Ruled over the readers, had spoken the word of God to them and were men of faith.

It is evident that they had done so diligently, courageously and faithfully Furthermore they led by example rather than by wielding authority (cf. 1 Pe 5:1-3).

The readers were to consider "the outcome (ekbasis) of their conduct". The Grk. "denotes 'a way out' (ek, 'out,' baino, 'to go')" (Vine). They were to thoughtfully contemplate The manner of exit or going out of their former leaders who sustained by faith were able to persevere to the end - without giving up or failing - going to a peaceful death whether that death was one of natural cause or hurried by those who oppressed them.

The admonition in these verses is to look to those former leaders who had departed and be influenced by their teaching remembering that the truths that they taught upheld them through to the end and then follow their example. Their responsibilities towards the living are addressed in 13:17.

*Jesus, the unchanging basis for their faith (8).*

The proposition that He is always the same provided further reason for perseverance. The Saviour who had upheld their past leaders was no different now and would sustain them also if they remained faithful. Furthermore He would be true to the principles, values and doctrines that had been taught in His name and this immutability argued that His followers should cling to the same teaching.

*Warning against being carried away (9).*

The caution (9a; cf. Eph 4:14; Gal 1:6-8). In contrast to the word of God spoken by faithful men, these new teachers brought diverse and strange doctrines.

The reason for the warning – these things would not give strength and stability to the heart (9b). The principle reference is likely to the Judeising teachers who would want to draw these Christians back to the Temple and the sacrificial offerings made upon its altars. The priests were permitted to eat a portion of some of these sacrifices – the sin offering (Lev 6:25-26); the trespass offering (Lev 11:1-7); the peace offering (Lev 7:14-15).

**D. Call for separation (13:10-14).***An altar provided for Christians (10).*

Christians are permitted to share in a more valuable sacrifice. This points to its exclusivity and picks up on the privileges enjoyed by the priests under the old order of things. But there is a more valuable sacrifice of which they the (Jews) were not able to partake while they served the tabernacle.

*Jesus suffered outside the city (11-12).*

First The ritual performed on the Day of Atonement was described to which the sacrifice of Jesus would be compared (11; Lev 16:27). The blood was offered for sin within the sanctuary but their bodies were taken outside the camp and burned.

Just as the bodies of those animals were burned outside the camp, Jesus too, so that He might sanctify the people with His blood, suffered outside the gate (12).

*The challenge presented (13-14).*

Let us... bearing His reproach. This is best understood in relation to the situation in early NT times seen in the book of Acts. The appeal is addressed to Christians who had continued to maintain close ties with the Temple and still placed a lot of confidence in that system though it had lost its significance. His call was for them to make a break with Judaism, align themselves with Jesus accepting whatever censure it attracted.

The reason – they didn't have in Jerusalem an abiding city but they sought the one to come (14). This would have a tremendous impact as 70 A.D. approached

**E. Spiritual sacrifices to be offered by Christians (13:15-16).**

"Therefore by Him let us continually..." (15). The Jews approached God through the ministrations of the Aaronic priesthood and the blood of animals, Christians were to do so by Christ. His reasoning is twofold:

1. It forms a climatic conclusion to the course of thought in the epistle concerning Jesus as the High Priest and the sufficiency of His sacrifice (10:12-13, 18).
2. It is the logical and inevitable consequence of the call to separate from Judaism and the Temple system of worship. This passage reveals the situation addressed by this book. The Jewish Christians had for a long time held on to the old ways (21:17-26). The apostle Paul in his evangelistic journeys encountered Jews who tried to maintain a connection with the synagogues for as long as they could. The situation in Ephesus well illustrates this attitude. Here "when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples" worshipping from that point in the school of Tyrannus (Ac 19:8-9). This consideration sheds light on the writer's call to separate in verse 13. The challenge to align with Jesus and come outside the camp of Judaism is supported by v. 14: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come." This idea would best connect with a forth-coming destruction of Jerusalem. Those who took such a stand followed in the faith of their father Abraham (11:13-16).

The sacrifices to be offered – the fruit of our lips (1 Pe 2:5) the doing of good and sharing what we have (cf. Rom 12:13; Gal 6:10; Prov 19:17).

**F. Submit to present leaders (13:17).**

"Obey those who rule over you ..." (17a).

Inasmuch as the elders were to take the oversight of the flock (1 Pe 5:2-3; Acts 20:28), those who rule over and are to be obeyed within the bounds of Scriptural authority were the elders.

It is apparent that men of the same office were referenced in v. 7. However, in the earlier context they had passed away and their example remembered but here they live and were to be obeyed.

*The duty of submission reinforced (17b-c).*

The role of elders is likened to that of watchmen (cf. Eze 3:16-21 33:1-9). "Their responsibility is great, and how they conduct themselves affects their own salvation. They not only must take heed to themselves, 1 Timothy 4:16, but they also have a responsibility to protect the flock, warning of impending danger, and calling straying lambs to return, Acts 20:28-31" (Robert Harkrider).

**G. Concerning prayer (13:18-21).**

*A request (18-19).*

The reason given in support of his request – he and those with him had lived "in good conscience" (18). However, the need had become more urgent - "that I may be restored to you the sooner" (19).

Implied here are two things. Firstly, he had been prevented from visiting them by adverse circumstances whether the lack of opportunity, sickness or imprisonment (cf. 23). Secondly, the writer had a relationship with his readers.

*Prayer made on their behalf (20-21).*

The request - "Now may the God of peace ... make you complete in every good work to do His will ..."

The instrumentality: "Through the blood of the everlasting covenant".

A peal of praise: "To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

**H. Closing words (13:22-25).**

*Final appeal (22).*

Bear with the intent of this exhortation. Two considerations may have been involved:

1. Perhaps the thought relates to the possibility that the readers would not accept his admonitions because of the unwelcome nature of the material presented – the insufficiency of the Levitical Priesthood, the superiority of Christ as High Priest and the call to finally sever links with the Temple and its system of worship.
2. Also he may be asking them to take into account the brevity of his treatment of the material; complex as it was it could have consumed many more words.

*Notification of impending visit (23).*

The writer would be accompanied by Timothy if joined by him shortly. He imparts the news that Timothy "has been set free (apoluo)". Apoluo signifies "to set free, release, loose" (Vine) which allows for two possible meanings. Either he had been set free after imprisonment or sent away on an undertaking from which the writer hoped he would soon be released and able to return. The various permutations have become a point of discussion in determining the possible author. However, the very ambiguity of the term should exclude it from being a significant factor relative to this question. Nevertheless, it can be reasonably concluded that the author was among Paul's band of co-workers.

*Salutation and benediction (24-25).*

As has been observed, the salutation seems a little strange – if the leaders were to be greeted, then to whom was the letter written; a question which cannot be answered this side of eternity. Those from Italy shared in this greeting indicating that the author was located there at the time.