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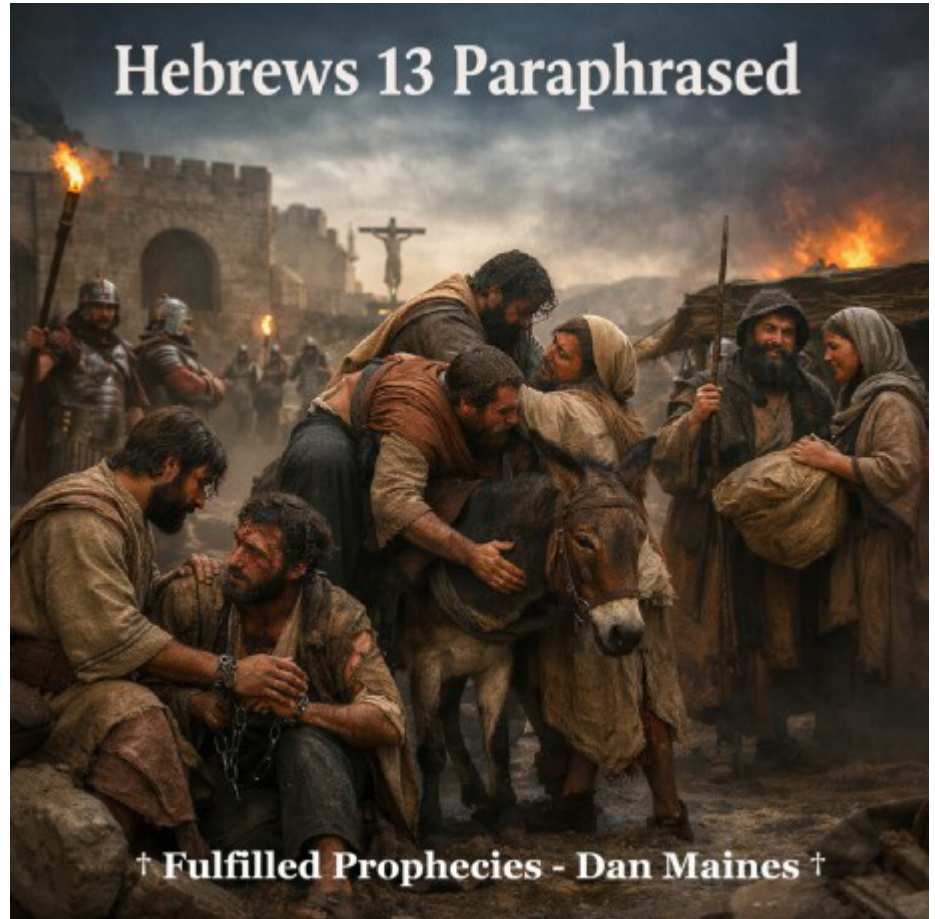
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Hebrews 13 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Hebrews 13 Paraphrased

Introduction

† The final chapter of Hebrews brings the teaching of the letter into everyday life. After explaining how Christ fulfilled the old covenant system, the writer now tells believers how to live in light of that reality.

† These instructions were written to believers who were living during the final years before the destruction of Jerusalem. They were learning to walk in the freedom of the fulfilled work of

Christ rather than returning to the temple system that was about to pass away (Hebrews 8:13).

† The chapter reminds them that faith isn't just belief, it shows itself in love, hospitality, faithfulness, and trust in God rather than the fading system of sacrifices and priests.

Scripture

Hebrews 13:1

Keep showing real love toward one another as brothers and sisters.

† Brotherly love was a defining mark of Christ's followers, something Jesus commanded directly (John 13:34-35).

† The early church practiced this love openly, supporting one another through persecution and hardship (Acts 2:44-45).

† Tertullian wrote that outsiders recognized Christians by their love for one another, saying they would say, See how they love one another.

Hebrews 13:2

Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, because some people have welcomed angels without realizing it.

† This refers back to examples like Abraham welcoming strangers who turned out to be messengers from God (Genesis 18:1-8).

† Hospitality was essential in the first century because believers often traveled and depended on fellow Christians for shelter (3 John 1:5-8).

† Clement of Rome praised early Christians for their generosity toward travelers and strangers.

Hebrews 13:3

Remember those who are in prison as if you were there with them, and remember those who are mistreated, since you also

live in a body and can suffer.

† Many believers were imprisoned during the persecutions under Roman authorities (Hebrews 10:34).

† Sharing in the suffering of others was a central part of Christian fellowship (Romans 12:15).

† Ignatius of Antioch praised churches that cared for imprisoned believers and those suffering persecution.

Hebrews 13:4

Marriage must be honored by everyone, and the marriage bed kept pure, because God will judge sexual immorality and adultery.

† Marriage was established by God from the beginning and was meant to be honored among believers (Genesis 2:24).

† The New Testament consistently calls believers to sexual purity as part of holy living (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

† Early Christian writings like The Didache strongly warned against adultery and immoral behavior.

Hebrews 13:5

Don't let your life be driven by the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, because God himself said, I will never leave you or abandon you.

† The writer echoes God's promise given to Joshua, reminding believers that God's presence is greater than earthly security (Joshua 1:5).

† Contentment was taught throughout the early church as a sign of trust in God's provision (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

† Clement of Alexandria taught that true riches were found in faith rather than possessions.

Hebrews 13:6

So we confidently say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be

afraid. What can people do to me?

† This reflects Psalm 118:6 and shows the believer's confidence in God's protection.

† Jesus also taught that believers shouldn't fear those who can harm the body but cannot touch the soul (Matthew 10:28).

† Polycarp demonstrated this confidence when he faced execution without fear.

Hebrews 13:7

Remember your leaders who spoke God's message to you. Consider the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith.

† The early church honored faithful teachers who had remained strong through persecution (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

† Their example showed that true faith endures even through suffering (Hebrews 11:36-38).

† Eusebius recorded many early leaders who remained faithful even to death.

Hebrews 13:8

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

† This statement affirms the unchanging character of Christ. His authority and promises don't change (Malachi 3:6).

† Even though the covenant system changed, Christ himself remained constant as the eternal High Priest (Hebrews 7:24-25).

† Irenaeus taught that Christ's nature and authority remain unchanging throughout history.

Hebrews 13:9

Don't be carried away by strange teachings. It's good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which never helped those who followed such rules.

† Some believers were being tempted to return to dietary laws and ceremonial regulations from the old covenant (Colossians 2:16-17).

† The writer reminds them that grace, not rituals, strengthens the believer's heart (Ephesians 2:8-9).

† Justin Martyr wrote that the ceremonial food laws were temporary shadows pointing to Christ.

Hebrews 13:10

We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

† The altar here refers to Christ's sacrifice, which replaced the temple sacrifices (Hebrews 10:10-12).

† Those still serving the old system couldn't receive the benefits of Christ while holding onto the temple system (Galatians 5:2-4).

† The writer is showing the complete transition from the old covenant system to the fulfilled work of Christ.

Hebrews 13:11

The bodies of animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest for sin are burned outside the camp.

† This refers to the Day of Atonement sacrifices described in the Law (Leviticus 16:27).

† These sacrifices symbolized sin being carried outside the camp, pointing forward to Christ.

† Early Christian teachers often used these images to explain Christ's sacrifice.

Hebrews 13:12

In the same way, Jesus also suffered outside the city gate so that he could make the people holy through his own blood.

† Jesus was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem (John 19:17-18).

† His sacrifice fulfilled the entire sacrificial system that the temple rituals pointed toward (Hebrews 9:12).

† Eusebius noted the symbolic meaning of Christ suffering outside the city just as the sin offerings were taken outside the camp.

Hebrews 13:13

So let's go to him outside the camp, accepting the shame he endured.

† Believers were being called to leave the old covenant system and identify fully with Christ.

† This meant separation from the temple system that was about to disappear (Hebrews 8:13).

† Many early Christians were rejected by Jewish leaders for following Christ rather than temple traditions.

Hebrews 13:14

For we don't have a lasting city here, but we are looking for the city that is coming.

† The earthly Jerusalem was temporary and would soon be destroyed in AD 70 (Matthew 24:1-2).

† Believers were looking for the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, which represents the new covenant people of God (Hebrews 12:22).

† Early Christians often described the church itself as the true city of God.

Hebrews 13:15

Through him then, let's continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that openly give thanks to his name.

† Praise replaces the old sacrificial system because Christ fulfilled the sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10:18).

† Believers now offer spiritual sacrifices such as praise and thanksgiving (1 Peter 2:5).

† Justin Martyr wrote that Christian worship replaced animal sacrifices with prayers and praise.

Hebrews 13:16

And don't forget to do good and share what you have, because God is pleased with sacrifices like these.

† Acts of kindness and generosity are described as spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (Philippians 4:18).

† The early church regularly cared for the poor and those in need (Acts 4:34-35).

† The Didache instructed believers to share freely with those in need.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them, because they keep watch over your souls as those who must give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, because that would be harmful to you.

† Spiritual leaders carried the responsibility of guiding the church and protecting it from false teaching (Acts 20:28).

† Accountability before God was part of their role (James 3:1).

† Ignatius wrote extensively about respecting church leadership.

Hebrews 13:18

Pray for us, because we are confident that we have a clear conscience and want to live honorably in everything.

† The writer asks for prayer, showing humility and dependence on the prayers of the church (1 Thessalonians 5:25).

† Living honorably was essential for Christian witness (1 Peter 2:12).

† Early Christian letters often ended with requests for prayer.

Hebrews 13:19

And I especially urge you to pray that I may be restored to you soon.

† The author may have been separated from the believers due to travel or imprisonment.

† Requests for prayer show the close connection between early Christian communities.

† Many early church leaders wrote letters to congregations while they were separated from them.

Hebrews 13:20

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, our Lord Jesus,

† Jesus is called the great Shepherd, fulfilling the promise that God himself would shepherd his people (Ezekiel 34:23).

† The resurrection confirms the power and authority of Christ's eternal covenant (Romans 6:9).

† Early Christians often described Christ as the Shepherd guiding the church.

Hebrews 13:21

equip you with everything good so that you may do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

† God empowers believers to live in obedience through Christ (Philippians 2:13).

† The goal of the Christian life is to reflect what pleases God.

† Early Christian prayers often ended with praise directed to Christ.

Hebrews 13:22

I ask you brothers and sisters to accept this message of

encouragement, because I have written to you briefly.

† The writer describes Hebrews as a word of encouragement, meaning exhortation or instruction (Acts 13:15).

† Even though the letter is long, it summarizes deep truths about Christ's fulfilled work.

† Early church leaders frequently referred to Hebrews as a powerful teaching letter.

Hebrews 13:23

You should know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I'll come with him to see you.

† Timothy was a close companion of Paul and well known among the early churches (Acts 16:1-3).

† His release suggests imprisonment related to persecution.

† Early church writings confirm Timothy's role in strengthening congregations.

Hebrews 13:24

Greet all your leaders and all the believers. Those from Italy send you greetings.

† This shows the strong connection between churches across different regions.

† Early Christian communities regularly shared greetings and encouragement across distances.

† Eusebius noted the widespread communication among early churches.

Hebrews 13:25

Grace be with you all.

† Grace was the central message of the gospel and the foundation of the new covenant (Ephesians 2:8).

† Many New Testament letters close with this reminder of God's favor toward believers.

† The early church consistently emphasized grace as the heart of the Christian message.

Historical References

† Clement of Rome described the unity and love practiced by early Christians.

† Ignatius of Antioch wrote about respecting church leadership and enduring persecution.

† Justin Martyr explained how Christian worship replaced temple sacrifices.

† Irenaeus affirmed the unchanging nature of Christ.

† Eusebius recorded the faithfulness of early church leaders during persecution.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We are called to live out genuine love and care for one another just as the early believers did.

† Our faith isn't built on rituals or religious systems but on the finished work of Christ.

† True worship today is expressed through praise, generosity, obedience, and trust in God.

† Even though the old covenant system has passed away, the principles of love, faithfulness, and perseverance still guide believers today.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why does Hebrews talk about leaving the camp?

A: It refers to leaving the old covenant temple system and identifying fully with Christ (Hebrews 13:13; Hebrews 8:13).

Q: What is the altar mentioned in Hebrews 13:10?

A: It represents Christ's sacrifice, which replaced the temple sacrifices of the old covenant (Hebrews 10:10-12).

Q: What city were believers looking for in Hebrews 13:14?

A: The heavenly Jerusalem, representing the new covenant people of God rather than the earthly city that was destroyed in AD 70 (Hebrews 12:22; Matthew 24:1-2).

Q: Why does Hebrews say Jesus suffered outside the gate?

A: The sin offerings under the Law were taken outside the camp and burned (Leviticus 16:27). Jesus fulfilled that picture when he was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, showing that his sacrifice replaced the entire temple system (Hebrews 13:12; John 19:17-18).

Q: Why does Hebrews warn about strange teachings?

A: Many believers were being pressured to return to old covenant food laws and temple traditions. The writer reminds them that the heart is strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial rules that never perfected anyone (Hebrews 13:9; Colossians 2:16-17).

Q: What sacrifices please God now that Christ fulfilled the old system?

A: The sacrifices God desires now are spiritual ones, praise, thanksgiving, doing good, and sharing with others. These replace the animal sacrifices that pointed forward to Christ (Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5; Philippians 4:18).

Q: Why does Hebrews emphasize remembering faithful leaders?

A: The early church had leaders who endured persecution and remained faithful to Christ. Their lives served as examples for believers to imitate, showing what genuine faith looks like in action (Hebrews 13:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Q: What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever?

A: It means Christ's character, authority, and promises never change. Even though the covenant system changed from the

old to the new, the Lord himself remains the same faithful Savior and High Priest forever (Hebrews 13:8; Hebrews 7:24-25; Malachi 3:6).

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

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Source Index

† Hebrews 13; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:10-12; Hebrews 12:22

† Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians

† Ignatius of Antioch, Epistles

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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