

Hebrews 13 - Moral Obligations of Believers; Evidence of Pauline Authorship; Postscript

II. Application Section of the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 10:19–13:25)

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Hebrews 13

- (4) Pastoral reminders (13:1-19)
 - (A) Love (13:1)

1 Let love of the brothers *and* sisters continue.

1 Let love of the brethren continue.

1 Let brotherly love continue.

1 Let brotherly love continue.

- The author now lists five social obligations (v1-6) of these Jewish believers:

- This describes the relationship believers should have among themselves, one to another, because of a common Lord

— When love for Jesus falters, love for the brethren usually fades as well (Cf. Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9-10; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Peter 1:7; 1 John 2:9)

— The readers were not only failing in their zeal for the race which they have set out (12:1,12) but also in the zeal in their love for one another

(B) Hospitality (13:2)

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

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

2 Stop neglecting to show hospitality to strangers, for by showing hospitality some have had angels as their guests without being aware of it.

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

- "...hospitality to strangers" - *philoxenia*, "to love strangers"; love of strangers was important and necessary because there were no accommodations for strangers in those days
- Also, as the author pointed out earlier, because of persecutions some believers had lost their homes because of their faith
- The phrasing of this verse indicates that some have neglected the love of strangers
- "...entertained angels" - Abraham did this when he showed them hospitality to three men, two of whom were actually angels (Gen 18); Lot did so as well (Gen 19). Others who followed their example are Gideon (Judges 6) and Manoah (Judges 13)
- Abraham received a special blessing because he showed hospitality, and we may as well (Cf. Matt 25:35)
- Hospitality is a concrete expression of Christian love today (Rom 12:13), especially Christian leaders (Titus 1:8)

(C) Visiting prisoners (13:3)

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

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

3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were in prison with them, as well as those who are mistreated, since they also are only mortal.

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

- "Remember" - have sympathy; we are to remember them in prayer and in other ways, including by identifying with them
- They were to identify with (show sympathy to) and remember two groups: those who were in prison and those who were suffering adversity

- "...the prisoners" - the prisoners in view were evidently Christians who were suffering for their testimonies (Cf. 10:34; Matt 25:36,40)
- Often prisoners in the Roman world had to depend on friends outside the prison to provide them with food and other necessities
- "...since you yourselves also are in the body" - this sympathy is needed because all believers are part of the same Body (1 Cor 12:26)

(D) Sexual fidelity (13:4)

- 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.
- 4 Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage bed* *is to be undefiled*; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
- 4 Let marriage be kept honorable in every way, and the marriage bed *undefiled*. For God will judge those who commit sexual sins, especially those who commit adultery.
- 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed *undefiled*: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
- Christians also need to maintain a high regard for marriage and remain sexually pure
- In the Old Covenant, Israelites were to punish fornicators and adulterers, but under the New Covenant, God *Himself* does it
- How does God judge fornicators and adulterers? — Sometimes they are judged in their own bodies (Rom 1:24-27). They are certainly judged at the final judgment (Rev 21:8; 22:15).
- Believers who commit these sins may be forgiven, but they will lose rewards in heaven (Eph 5:5f)
- David was forgiven, but he suffered the consequences of his adultery for years to come; and, he suffered in the hardest way: through his own children
- "...bed" - *coite*, the origin of the English word "coitus"; the emphasis is not on the bed itself, but on the sexual union and sexual purity between married partners, because God will judge whoremongers and adulterers

(E) Financial fidelity (13:5-6)

- 5 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**,"

5 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 forsake you,"

5 Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for God has said, "I will never leave you or abandon you."

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.

- "...the love of money" - greed, covetousness; greed has lured many believers away from a life of faithful discipleship
- We need to cultivate a spirit of contentment to prevent apostasy. Contentment does not have anything to do with how much money we have, contrary to the world's view.
- The character of the person; he must be free from materialism. The basis is God's promise to provide their (our) every need (Phil 4:19).
- "...I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU" - quoted from Deut 31:6; Joshua 1:5

We can assume that the love of money was another temptation to which the recipients of this letter were showing signs of giving in. One of the results of persecution was the loss of property (10:34). In these circumstances, the Christian response should not be to grasp more eagerly at material things, but to rely quietly on God's provision, even in the face of human opposition.

6 so that we confidently say, "**THE LORD IS MY HELPER**, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

6 so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"

6 Hence we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

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

- "The LORD IS MY HELPER" - quoted from Ps 118:6

— The point is to teach believers that man cannot hurt them

Characteristics of Good Teachers

1. They proclaim Biblical truth
2. They are men of faith
3. They live a spiritual life worthy of imitation

(F) Imitate leaders (13:7)

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.

7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.

7 Remember your leaders, those who have spoken God's word to you. Think about the impact of their lives, and imitate their faith.

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.

- The author now gives the readers three religious obligations...

- "Remember" - *mnemoneuo*, to observe carefully (not idolize them)

— We are to "remember" them in order to "consider" their godly teaching and examples

— In Heb 11, he encouraged them to imitate the faith and patient endurance of the OT saints. Here, he tells them to imitate the faith of the more recent saints who had been their previous teachers.

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

8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.

8 Jesus, the Messiah, *is* the same yesterday and today—and forever!

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

- This verse is frequently taken out of context: a text apart from its context is a pretext.

— The context of this verse simply teaches that Jesus can give believers victory in their trials.

— He brought victory for the distant saints of Heb 11, and for the more recent saints (v7)

- He was not always the same: until the Incarnation (for all eternity past) He existed only in the form of God (Phil 2:5-11)

— He became a mortal man, subject to hunger and thirst, to fatigue and weakness, and to death. After His Resurrection, His person changed again to immortal man.

— He is not always the same in His program: foods that could not be eaten at various times during the OT, can now be eaten. Also, blood sacrifices were required in the past, but not after Jesus's death and resurrection.

— He is not the same in how He deals with saints: He chose to save some saints from death, fire and lions, but allowed others to be tortured to death. Both groups were exercising faith and were commended for their faith, but experienced different outcomes.

— Jesus is not unchangeable in His Person or His program, but He is unchangeable in His divine nature: He always has been, and always will be, God.

(G) Doctrinal fidelity (13:9-14)

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.

9 Do not be carried away 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.

9 Stop being carried away by all kinds of unusual teachings, for it is good that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by food laws that have never helped those who follow them.

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.

— "...varied" - *poikilos*, various sorts, varieties; in contrast to the unity of the doctrine that has been the author's emphasis (1:1—10:18)

— "...strange" - *xenos*, foreign, strange, alien; in contrast to those found in Scripture (Eph 4:19)

— We should reject "teachings" that deviate from apostolic doctrine. This is a strong safeguard against apostasy.

— Rather than accepting these ideas, we should receive strength by taking in God's grace that comes through His Word (Cf. 4:12-13; 1 Peter 2:2). This strength comes from spiritual, rather than material, food.

— One of the "strange" teachings prevalent at the time of writing was that certain foods, or abstinence from certain foods, resulted in greater godliness (Cf. Col 2:16; 1 Tim 4:1-4). This is what Judaism taught as well.

— Any teaching that is not based on Scripture, no matter how spiritual the movement may appear to be on the outside, is suspect.

— "...strengthened by grace, not by foods" - established by grace rather than by the Law

— Spiritual maturity will come by means of Jesus' teachings, not by going back to the Levitical system

— Those who trust in "meats" will never attain the goal of spiritual fellowship with God

Characteristics of False Teachers

Here are three characteristics of false teachers:

1. They promote false, diverse doctrines
2. They emphasize the external rather than the internal such as eating certain meats
3. Their teaching fails to produce effective, spiritual results

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

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

10 We have an altar, and those who serve in the tent have no right to eat at it.

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

- Believers under the Old Covenant ate part of what they offered to God as a peace offering (Lev 7:15-18). However, believers under the New Covenant feed spiritually on Jesus, who is our Peace Offering.

- Those still under the Old Covenant ("which serve the tabernacle") had "no right" to partake of Him for spiritual sustenance and fellowship with God, since their confidence (faith) was still in the Old Covenant.
- "...altar" - *thysiasterion*, the altar of whole burnt offerings which stood in the court of the priests in the temple at Jerusalem
- Not just the altar, but includes the food that was upon the altar. This food was the means of support for the Levitical priests.

The Altar Replaced

The writer reminds his readers that, while normally the priests could partake and eat of the sin sacrifices, there was one sin sacrifice the High Priest could not eat and that was the Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, sacrifice. The High Priest could not eat that sacrifice, but the believer can eat by partaking of the spiritual food—Jesus. Jesus is the final Yom Kippur sacrifice.

The NT believer has a greater privilege than the most privileged person in the OT. Hence, these Jewish believers have everything Judaism has and more because Jesus is superior to the three Pillars of Judaism.

11 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**.

11 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.

11 For the bodies of animals, whose blood is taken into the sanctuary by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp.

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.

- Here, the writer compared Jesus to the "sin offering" that the Jewish high priest offered on the Day of Atonement

- "...camp" - refers to the camp of Judaism

— The Yom Kippur sacrifice was not burned on the altar like other sacrifices

— The body and the remains were taken *outside the camp* and burned in their entirety (Lev 16:27). This portrayed the removal of sin.

12 **Therefore Jesus also** suffered outside the **gate**, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood.

12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

12 That is why Jesus, in order to sanctify the people by his own blood, also suffered outside the city gate.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

- The principle of burning the Day of Atonement sacrifice outside the camp is now given a present day application...

- "Therefore Jesus also" - based on v11, Jesus suffered and died outside of Jerusalem ("outside the gate") so that "He may sanctify the people"

— Since He is outside the camp (outside of Judaism), He is there to receive His people and they should go outside (of Judaism) to receive Him

- "...gate" - the city gate of Jerusalem; this fulfilled the Day of Atonement ritual, in that the priest burned the remains of the two sacrificial animals outside the precincts of the wilderness camp.

— It also fulfilled the ritual of that day in that Jesus' execution outside the city gate involved the shame of exclusion from the sacred precincts. It symbolized His rejection by the Jewish authorities.

The place where Jesus suffered was located outside the gate; Jesus died outside the city walls of Jerusalem. The Yom Kippur sacrifice was burned outside the Camp of Judaism. Those who stayed inside the Camp of Judaism could not eat it. The writer's point is that the adherents of the Temple are excluded from the privileges of the Heavenly Altar. Jesus suffered outside the gate. He suffered and died outside Jerusalem for the purpose that he might sanctify the people. The means was through his own blood, not animal blood. Since Jesus is outside the camp, He is there to receive His people and they should go outside the camp to receive Him. For now, this entails going outside the camp of Judaism; later it will also entail going outside the City (gate) of Jerusalem.

13 So then, let us go out to Him **outside the camp**, bearing His reproach.

13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

13 Therefore go to him outside the camp and endure the insults he endured.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

- "...outside the camp" - outside the camp of Judaism; he uses the present tense: "Let us keep on going outside to Him"

— Jesus is outside the Camp of Judaism

— Even now, the readers should be on their way outside the city, out of the camp, abandoning the city. And they should go forth unto him.

- The author views this as an immediate need:

— Jerusalem was destined to be destroyed (Matt 24:1-2; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24)

- Now, they are to go outside the Camp of Judaism bearing his reproach; later, they will need to go outside the City of Jerusalem.
- Christians bear Jesus' reproach when they identify with Him. He suffered reproach (insults, shame, rejection), and so do we, but only when we identify with His name and Person.
- This was especially true with the original Jewish readers. They needed to cut their emotional and religious ties to Judaism.

The readers must identify with His rejection. Since Jesus is outside the camp, He is still out there ready and waiting to receive His people. The Jewish believers need to keep from going back into the Camp of Judaism. They need to go outside the camp and identify with Jesus. For now, Jewish believers need to abandon the religion that rejected the Messiah. As long as they stay inside the camp, they cannot partake of the privileges of the Heavenly Altar.

- 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.
- 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.
- 14 For here we have no permanent city but are looking for the one that is coming.
- 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.
- The reason Jewish believers must go outside the camp and outside the city is that Jerusalem was destined to be destroyed
- The readers knew from three prophecies given by Jesus that Jerusalem was to be destroyed (Matt 24:1-2; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24)
- Because of this impending event, these believers needed to seek a permanent city, which will replace the temporary city of Jerusalem and its present system
- The "city" they (and we) are to seek is the New Jerusalem

(H) Sacrifices (13:15-16)

(a) Praise (13:15)

- 15 Through Him then, let's continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name.
- 15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.
- 15 Therefore, through him let us always bring God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess his name.
- 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.

- Even though God does not require periodic animal and vegetable sacrifices from us, we should, as believer-priests, offer other sacrifices to Him
 - These sacrifices include "praise" (v15; Hosea 14:2) and "doing good" (works, v16) and (even, especially) "sharing" what we have with others; giving Him ourselves (Rom 12:1)
 - In Judaism, sacrifices were offered at set times, but for Christians praise goes up all the time
 - The background for this is the OT thanksgiving offering, which was given for favor graciously bestowed. They had received grace from God, and now He should be thanked.
 - The author clearly puts the believer in a priestly ministry under the High Priest, Jesus

(b) Giving (13:16)

- 16 And do not neglect **doinggood** and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
- 16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
- 16 Do not neglect to do good and to be generous, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.
- 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
- Believers are fellow-priests: the job of a priest is to sacrifice of praise to God; they are to worship God for who He is and for what He does.
- "...doing good" - performing kindly services and sharing
- "Doing good" fulfills the requirements of v1, to love the brethren

(I) Obey leaders (13:17)

- 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 **withjoy, not groaning**; for this *would be* unhelpful for you.
- 17 Obey your leaders and submit to *them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.
- 17 Continue to follow and be submissive to your leaders, since they are watching over your souls as those who will have to give a word of explanation. By doing this, you will be letting them carry out their duties joyfully, and not with grief, for that would be harmful for you.
- 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.
- All of the privileges believers have do not release them from being obligated to the spiritual oversight of church elders and pastors
- Whereas they ought to remember their past rulers, they also ought to obey the present ones, to *submit to them*, because submission shows obedience

- We should make their work in this life easier by being obedient and submissive to them
- We are all called to submit to others in Scripture:
 - Church members are to submit to faithful pastors (13:17)
 - Everyone is to submit to government authorities (Rom 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14)
 - Everyone is to submit to God (James 4:7)
 - Wives are to submit to their own husbands (Eph 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1)
- "...with joy, not groaning" - relates to the submission rather than to the giving of an account
- The congregation has a responsibility to help the rulers (pastors/elders) rule with joy and satisfaction. The believers will have joy and will be able to watch with joy because they receive such oversight (Cf. 3 John 4), but they will have grief if they do not submit to oversight.
- "groaning" - inner, unexpressed groanings; this shows that the sheep, not the shepherds, will suffer the consequences (v9)

Call to Submission

1. The leaders are responsible to watch over the moral and doctrinal health of the congregation.
2. The leaders will some day have to give an account of their stewardship of leadership at the Judgment Seat of the Messiah.
3. The leaders would like to exercise their ministry with joy, and not with grief.
4. A lack of submission is *unprofitable* for the rebels because they, too, will be judged at the Judgment Seat of the Messiah.

(J) Prayer (13:18-19)

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.

18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.
- The writer confessed the same need or prayer as his brothers and sisters

19 And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be **restored** to you more quickly.

19 And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.

19 I especially ask you to do this so that I may be brought back to you sooner.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

- The author now gives an emphatic prayer request: it is a specific prayer request to pray for the release of the writer ("that I may be restored to you the sooner")
- The author is apparently in prison, but hopes to be released as a result of their prayers
- "...restored" - shows that he was previously with them, but is now separated and hopes to see them again soon
- Hebrews was not originally anonymous, since the writer and the readers knew each other
- Of the epistle writers, only Paul solicits personal prayer (1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1; Heb 13:18?)

(5) Benediction (13:20-25)

20 Now may the God of peace, whobrought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, that is, Jesus our Lord,

20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

20 Now may the God of peace, who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep,

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,

- In this benediction he reaffirms his own confidence that the *God of peace* can meet their present trials and present needs on the basis of the New Covenant, which gives them a sure standing. He makes 9 statements in this benediction:

- "Now may the God of peace" - this points out that God is a God of peace and will answer their need for peace in the midst of trials and inner turmoil (Phil 4:7).

- "...who brought up from the dead" - the point of this phrase is that it shows God's ability to meet their need

— "brought up" signifies the restoration as being made more emphatic by stressing the depths from which Jesus was brought up

— It shows that victory was attained after the defeat of death was suffered. The fact that He could restore Jesus from the depths of death itself—clearly shows He can also meet their needs in their lifetime. The name *Lord* emphasizes His deity and the name *Jesus* emphasizes His humanity; therefore, He is the God-Man.

- "...the great Shepherd of the sheep" - previously John called Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10:14) and Peter called Him the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). Here, He is the Great Shepherd, greater than any in Judaism.

- He is the "great shepherd of the sheep," which shows the relationship of the Messiah to the flock (Ps 22-24). The job of a *shepherd* is to meet the needs of the *sheep*, and he can meet every need created by their trials.

- "...through the blood of eternal covenant" - this is the New Covenant which is the basis on which God now deals with believers. He meets their needs on the basis of this covenant.

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus *died* for the sheep (John 10:11)

As the Great Shepherd, Jesus *lives* for the sheep in heaven today, working on their behalf

As the Chief Shepherd, Jesus will *come* for the sheep at His return (1 Peter 5:4)

21 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.

21 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.

21 equip you with everything good to do his will, accomplishing in us what pleases him through Jesus, the Messiah. To him be glory forever and ever! Amen.

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- "...equip you in every good thing" - through the blood of Lord Jesus, which emphasizes the supply of what is lacking and the correction of what is faulty, God can equip them in every good work and make them complete in order to bring them to maturity.

— "equip" - *katartidzo*, it is the writer's concern that his readers be ready to reign with Christ. This was the purpose for remaining faithful to God throughout the epistle. Part of our full inheritance (full rest, full salvation) is the privilege of reigning with Him (2 Tim 2:12).

— To obtain this privilege, we must continue to press on toward maturity by following Christ faithfully rather than turning from Him

— "...working in us" - specifically, God wants to equip them to do his will. That is His purpose.

— "...that which is pleasing in His sight" - God is working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight. This shows that God is working out His own good pleasure in the believers.

— "...through Jesus Christ" - God does this through Jesus Christ: Jesus is the means through which God works out His own good pleasure. God is working His good pleasure in them but He is doing it through this One.

22 But I urge you, brothers and sisters, listen patiently to this word of exhortation, for I have written to you **briefly**.

22 But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

22 I urge you, brothers, to listen patiently to my encouraging message, for I have written you a short letter.

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

- "...briefly" - he is not saying the words are few in number; rather, he is saying an argument that could be continued at great length is being cut short

23 Know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.

23 Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.

23 You should know that our brother Timothy has been set free. If he comes soon, he will be with me when I see you.

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

- Another piece of evidence that the author is Paul

Timothy

Timothy was one of the best known of Paul's companions and fellow laborers. He was evidently one of Paul's own converts, as the apostle describes him as his beloved and faithful son in the Lord (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2).

It is evident that his mother Eunice was converted to Christ on Paul's 1st missionary journey to Derbe and Lystra. The Apostle Paul, having formed a high opinion of his "own son in the faith," arranged that he should become his companion (Acts 16:3) and took and circumcised him, so that he might conciliate the Jews.

Timothy went with Paul in his journey through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia; also to Troas and Philippi and Berea (Acts 17:14). Then he followed Paul to Athens, and was sent by him with Silas on a mission to Thessalonica (Acts 17:15; 1 Thess 3:2). We next find him at Corinth with Paul (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1) He is again noticed as with the apostle at Ephesus (Acts 19:22) whence he is sent on a mission into Macedonia. He accompanied Paul afterwards into Asia, where he was with him for some time (Acts 20:4).

When the apostle was a prisoner at Rome, Timothy joined him (Philemon 1:1), where it appears he also suffered imprisonment (Heb 13:23). The last notice of Timothy is Paul's request that he should "do his diligence to come before winter" and should "bring the cloak" left with Carpus at Troas, which in the winter Paul would so much need in his dungeon: about 67 AD (2 Tim 4:13,21).

According to tradition, after the apostle's death, he settled in Ephesus as his sphere of labor, and there found a martyr's grave. Eusebius makes him first bishop of Ephesus, if so John's residence and death must have been later [Eccl. Hist. iii. 43]. Nicephorus reports

that he was clubbed to death at Diana's feast, for having denounced its licentiousness [Eccl. Hist. iii. 11].

It was Paul's custom to associate with his own name that of one or more of his companions in the opening salutations in the Epistles: Timothy's name occurs in 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; Philemon 1:1 (along with that of Silvanus), in 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1.

24 Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. **Those from Italy** greet you.
24 Greet all of your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.
24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who are from Italy greet you.
24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.
- "...Those from Italy" - they are present with the writer either inside or outside the geographical borders of Italy
— This would suggest an origin during the first imprisonment in Rome, from which, after two years, he was subsequently released: spring of 63 AD
— This would have been the same period in which Paul's Prison Epistles were written: Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.

25 Grace be with you all.
25 Grace be with you all.
25 May grace be with all of you!
25 Grace be with you all. Amen.
<Written to the Hebrews from Italy, by Timothy.>

Evidence for Pauline Authorship

When one understands that there were apparently forgeries of Thessalonian letters being circulated, then several passages start to make more sense (2 Thess 2:2). Thus at the end of that letter, Paul includes a sort of private mark, a personal token:

2 Thess 3:17-18:

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.
18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Note how Paul is emphasizing that he has signed the letter with his own hand (most were probably drafted by an amanuensis or secretary). He would also include his private mark at the end so that they would know that the letter was really from him..."The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

So what is this signature or style item that is included in every letter from him (Rom 16:24; 1 Cor 16:23-24; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 6:18; Eph 6:24; Phil 4:23; Col 4:18; 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 3:18; 1 Tim 6:21; 2 Tim 4:22; Titus 3:15; Philemon 25)? — “Grace...”

So how does Hebrews end? “Grace be with you all. Amen.” (Heb 13:25). Why is this so impressive of Paul’s style? Because the word “Grace” does not even appear in any of the other epistles! (Except once by Peter, where it is used as an exhortation and not as a salutation or blessing as here (Cf. 2 Peter 3:18).

2 Peter 3:15-16:

15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written **unto you;**

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other **Scriptures**, unto their own destruction.

Furthermore, Peter calls Paul’s letter “Scripture”: if Paul wrote an inspired letter to the Jews scattered abroad, and that letter has been lost, then a part of God’s inspired, eternal Word has been destroyed; and this is impossible. [This passage is possibly referring to Heb 6!]

The Author of Hebrews

- Was a Jew acquainted with the details of Mosaic ritualism (Heb 13:13)
- Was acquainted with Greek philosophy
- Had been in prison in the locality where the ones addressed resided (Heb 10:34)
- Was at that time in prison in Italy (Heb 13:19; 13:24)
- Timothy was his companion and messenger (Heb 13:23)

When Paul was in Rome in prison he used Timothy to carry messages, and he sent him on a trip from the west to the east (Phil 2:19). He hoped to be liberated (Heb 13:19), and this is the same thought that is expressed in Phil 1:25 and Philemon 22.

[Source: McGee, J. Vernon: *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981, S. 5:621.]

Other Style Identities

Paul also uses the Greek word *huios* “sons,” rather than a similar Greek word *teknon*, which other writers use, which means “children.”

- The doctrine discussed in Rom 8:16 and Heb 10:15 are co-linear
- The doctrines discussed in 1 Cor 3:13 and Heb 5:12-14 are co-linear

- The writer says "Pray for us" (Heb 13:18). There is only one epistle writer that makes that statement: none other than Paul.

Comparisons

Following is list of representations which are found in Hebrews and in Paul's other epistles, which are not found in the works of other NT writers:

- Heb 1:1,3 with 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15-16
- Heb 1:4; 2:9 with Phil 2:8-9
- Heb 2:14 with 1 Cor 15:54,57
- Heb 7:16,18-19 with Rom 2:29; Gal 3:3,24
- Heb 7:26 with Eph 4:10
- Heb 8:5; 10:1 with Col 2:17
- Heb 10:12-13 with 1 Cor 15:25

The Love of Christ

- In Rom 8:35-39, Paul lists a number of things that cannot separate you from the love of Christ. He lists 7 things, then 10 more, for a total of 17.
- In Heb 12:18-24, we find a similar list: Again there are 7 things, then 10 more, for a total of 17.
- In Gal 5:19-21 there is a list of 17 things.

Postscript to the Epistle

Fortunately there are three ancient writings from which, by pooling their material together, the readers' response can be documented.

- Josephus, a first century Jewish historian and an unbeliever as far as Jesus was concerned. He was an eyewitness of the events of 70 AD.
- Hegesippus, a Jewish believer who lived in the second century.
- Eusebius, a Gentile Christian who lived in the fourth century.

— All three wrote concerning these events

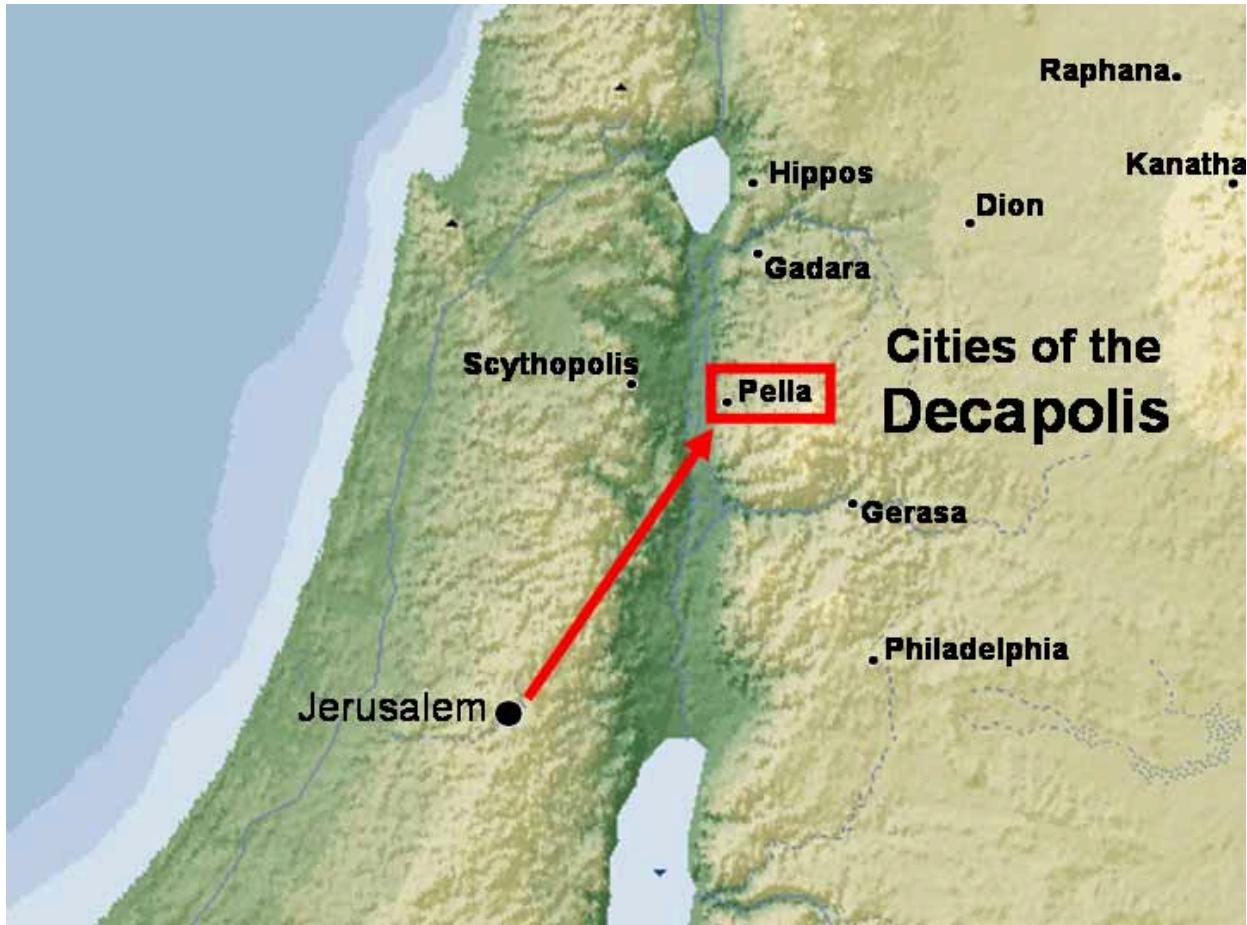
The Decapolis

The Decapolis is the name given to the region occupied by a league of "ten cities" (Matt 4:25; Mark 5:20; 7:31). Such combinations of Greek cities arose as Rome assumed dominion in the East, to promote their common interests in trade and commerce, and for mutual protection against the surrounding peoples. They were independent of the local tetrarchy, and answerable directly to the governor of Syria. They enjoyed the rights of association and asylum; they struck their own coinage, paid imperial taxes and were liable to military service [Ant., XIV, iv, 4; BJ, I, vii, 7; II, xviii, 3; III, ix, 7; Vita, 65, 74].

- Scythopolis (Bethshan), the capital of the league, was on the West side of Jordan
- Hippos (Susiyeh)
- Gadara (Umm Qeis)
- Pella (Fahil), (8 mi SE of Bethshan)
- Philadelphia (Amman)
- Gerasa (Jerash)
- Dion (Adun?)
- Canatha (Qanawat)
- Raphana
- Damascus

Pella

Pella is 8 miles SE of Bethshan (Scythiopolis). When Alexander conquered the Holy Land (332 BC), some of his veterans settled the ancient site, which reminded them of the birthplace of Alexander and the capital of Macedonia, so they named it with the Greek name, Pella. It became part of the Roman Empire under Pompey, 64 AD [Josephus *Antiquities* XIII xv 4; XIV iv 4.].



Postscript to the Epistle

When these Jewish believers received this letter, they read it and they obeyed. They made their break with Judaism once-and-for-all complete. Within a two-year period of time after the letter was written, the First Jewish Revolt broke out in 66 AD.

At that point, the entire community of Jewish believers, numbering tens of thousands strong (over 20k alone lived in Jerusalem at that time), left the country, crossed the Jordan River to the East Bank, and went up to the city of Pella, one of the cities of the Decapolis. Four years later, in 70 AD, the war ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple —just as Jesus had predicted (Luke 19; 21). A total of over 1,100,000 Jews were killed in that Roman conflict.

These three ancient writers indicate that *not a single Jewish believer lost his life* in that conflict because of their response and their obedience to the Epistle to the Hebrews...and in conformance to the instructions Jesus issued (Luke 21), which is often confused with the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24 & Mark 13). [Source: Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G.: *The Messianic Jewish Epistles: Hebrews, James, First Peter, Second Peter, Jude* . 1st ed. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2005.]

Pella remained a strong Christian city after receiving the refugees fleeing Jerusalem 66-70 AD. It also hosted many monasteries during the prosperous Byzantine period...until invaded by the Persians and the Muslims in 7th century.