

GEMS FROM THE ENDINGS OF THE EPISTLES
Part XXI: Gems From The Ending Of Hebrews, A. D. 68-69
(Hebrews 13:1-25)

I. Introduction

- A. The epistle of Hebrews was written by an unknown author around A. D. 68-69 shortly after the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 434, 777).
- B. The author's purpose in the epistle was to encourage Hebrew Christians to overcome the pressures of their countrymen to return to Judaism rather than to continue in faithfulness to Christ and His Church, *Ibid.*, p. 779.
- C. The epistle's ending at Hebrews 13:1-25 captures this theme, so we view it for our application and edification:

II. Gems From The Ending Of Hebrews, A. D. 68-69; Hebrews 13:1-25.

- A. Opposite allowing healthy spiritual life to cease in the local church body by reverting to dead spiritual Judaism, the author called for an intense focus on that body life, Hebrews 13:1-3:
 - 1. Brotherly love was to continue in the Christian community, Hebrews 13:1.
 - 2. They were to entertain strangers, referring to travelling evangelists and missionaries, for by entertaining strangers, some like Abraham in Genesis 18:3 have entertained heavenly angels unawares, Hebrews 13:2.
 - 3. Believers who were in prison for their faith were to be remembered along with other believers who suffered adversity for their faith, for they were in the same spiritual body as such believers, Hebrews 13:3.
- B. In contrast to unbelievers in Judaism, Christians were to maintain the highest moral standards, honoring marriage and the marriage bed as undefiled while standing against prostitution and adultery, Hebrews 13:4.
- C. In opposition to covetousness that was common among unbelievers in Judaism, Christians were to live lives free of greed, being content with what they possessed, for the Lord had promised never to leave nor to forsake them and always to be their helper regarding livelihood issues, Hebrews 13:5-6.
- D. In contrast to reverting back to dead Judaism, the readers were to recall those in the Church who had the rule over them, who had spoken the word of God to them, whose examples of faith they were to follow, recalling the end of their manner of life (like the recently martyred Paul and Peter), Hebrews 13:7.
- E. Opposite the claims of dead Judaism that Jesus Christ was a false Messiah, the readers of Hebrews were to recall that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow as the eternal God, Hebrews 13:8.
- F. Instead of being led away into dead Judaism by diverse and strange teachings, they were to recall that it was good for the inner man to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods which do not benefit those who are devoted to them, Hebrews 13:9. Indeed, we Christians have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat, that altar being our spiritual fellowship with the Lord, Hebrews 13:10. The author of Hebrews recalled how the bodies of the sacrificial animals of the tabernacle whose blood was brought into the tabernacle were burned outside the camp as sin offerings much like the Lord Jesus was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem, Hebrew 13:11-12. We Christians then need to go outside of the camp of Judaism to bear the reproach of Christ as we have no continuing city here on this earth, but we seek the New Jerusalem to come, Hebrews 13:13-14 with Revelation 21.
- G. We should then offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks in His name, Hebrews 13:15. We should also continue to do good in sharing what we have with fellow needy believers, for with such sacrifices God is pleased, Hebrews 13:16.
- H. Christians are to obey those church leaders who have the rule over them, for they watch for the welfare of their souls as men who must give an account to Christ, Hebrews 13:17a. They need to rule with joy, not with grief, for making our leaders rule over us with grief is not profitable for us, Hebrews 13:17b.
- I. The author asked his readers to pray for him and his associates as they had a good conscience in all things, and he hoped that they would be restored to their readers the sooner, Hebrews 13:18-19.
- J. The author then gave one of the most moving benedictions in Scripture, referring to several major themes in the epistle of peace, blood, covenant, resurrection, Shepherd, Hebrews 13:20-21; *Ibid.*, p. 812.
- K. He noted that Timothy was about to be released from prison (Hebrews 13:22-23a) so that the author would join Timothy in coming with him to visit his readers, Hebrews 13:23b.
- L. The author then gave his final greeting and called for God's grace to be with them all, Hebrews 13:24-25.

Lesson: *Hebrews 13 bears the author's burden that Hebrew believers not return to Judaism but stay true to Christ.*

Application: *May we not yield to pressure to revert to our pre-salvation false religiosity but stay true to Christ.*