

EXPLANATION OF 58TH BIBLEBOOK

HEBREWS 13 (A.D. 64)

OUTLINE

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Section 7. Hebrews 13:1-21 Practising Christian Faith

13:1-6. Christians are called to live a moral life with high standards

a. Christians are called to love.

13:1. The brotherly love *must* remain *continually*.¹

The love for brothers is not an option, but a command².

b. Christians are called to show hospitality.

13:2. You *must never* forget the love for strangers, because by this without knowing it some have entertained angels^{3,4}.

To show hospitality is also a command to engage, entertain and care for strangers. Especially Christian leaders must show hospitality⁵.

c. Christians are called to care for the persecuted (imprisoned).

13:3. You *must continually* remember those in bonds/chains as fellow-prisoners, and (remember) those who are *time and again* mistreated as being yourselves (mistreated) in body.⁶

Lucian (in 'The death of Perigrinus')(165 A.D.) wrote that Christians left no stone unturned in their endeavour to procure his (Perigrinus') release. When this proved impossible, they looked after his wants in all other matters with untiring concern and devotion. The women and children waited all day outside the prison, the church leaders bribed their way inside to spend the night inside with him and meals were brought into the prison.

Christians should have a capacity for putting themselves in the place of those suffering and ill-treated⁷ and exercise imaginative sympathy. They should imagine what it would be like when they in their body were in such circumstances.

¹ **13:1.** The brotherly love (loving each other)(η φιλαδελφια)(n-nf-s) *must* remain *continually* (μενετω<μενω)(vmpa—zs *iMperative*).

² Psalm 133:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10; 1 John 3:16-18

³ Genesis 18:1-33

⁴ **13:2.** You (plural) *must never* forget (being unmindful)(επιλανθανεσθε>επιλανθανομαι)(vmpn—yp *iMperative*) the love for strangers (to show hospitality) (η φιλοξενια)(n-gf-s), because (γαρ)(cs conjunction subordinating) by (δια) (pg=preposition genitive) this (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο) (apd-gf-s = adjective pronominal *demonstrative* genesis feminine singular) without knowing it ('unawares') (ελαθον<λανθανω)(viaa--zp) some (τινες)(apinm-p *indefinite*) have entertained (ξενισαντες<ξενιζω)(vpaanm-p) angels (ο αγγελος)(n-am-p).

⁵ 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8

⁶ **13:3.** You *must continually* remember (μυνησκεσθε>μυνησκομαι)(vmpn—yp *iMperative*) those in bonds/chains (in prison) (ο δεσμιος) (n-gm-poun) as (ως)(cs=conjunction subordinating) (if you were their) fellow-prisoners (συνδεδεμενοι<συνδεω)(vprpnmyp)(*the perfect tense* emphasises the completed state or condition), and (remember) those who are *time and again* mistreated (κακουχομενων>κακκουχω) (vppgm-p) as (ως)(cs) being (οντες>εμυ)(vppanmyp) yourselves (αυτος-η-ον)(nprnmyp) (mistreated) in (εν(pd=preposition dative) body (το σωμα)(n-dn-s).

⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:26

d. Christians are called to set high standards for sexual morality.

13:4. Marriage (must be) held in honour by all; and the marriage bed (must be kept) undefiled. For God will *certainly* judge the sexual immoral and the adulterers.⁸

The marriage union (including sex within marriage) is divinely ordained and this sacred institution must not be polluted by the intrusion of a third party of either sex or by sexual immoral practices (incest, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, prostitution, paedophilia, pornography).

- ‘πορνους’ are people who indulge in all kinds of sexual irregularities besides the legitimate sex in marriage. This includes sex before marriage, sex with a family member (incest), sex with a person of the same sex (homosexuality or lesbianism), sex with a stranger (prostitution), sex with an animal (bestiality) or sex in a religious or idolatrous situation⁹. It also includes pornography, dirty jokes and petting.
- ‘μοιχους’ are people of either sex that are unfaithful to their marriage vow. It includes flirting, having an affair, polygamy and polyandry and unlawful divorce.

e. Christians are called to set high standards for financial integrity.

13:5. The manner of life (must be kept) without the love of money; being *continually* content with the present things; for he has said (*and his word keeps on ringing in our ears*): “I will by no means abandon you and also not by no means forsake you.”¹⁰

Christians should never live for money! They need to work for an income¹¹. But they must not wear themselves out to get rich, but rather have the wisdom to show restraint (in the area of making money)¹². Christians cannot serve God and Money (Mammon) at the same time¹³. A man’s life never consists in the abundance of his possessions¹⁴ or in his endeavour to keep up certain appearances (clothes, car, home, holidays, etc). The love of money is one of the roots of all kinds of evil (bribery, extortion, corruption, robbery, etc)¹⁵. The love of money disqualifies a Christian from becoming a church leader¹⁶.

Contentment is the opposite of covetousness. “Covetousness” (*a strong desire for*) in the New Testament can refer to (*a strong desire for*) money, materialism¹⁷ or to (*a strong desire for*) illicit sex¹⁸. A Christian should already be content when his basic material needs (food, clothing and a shelter) and social needs (marriage or celibacy) are being met¹⁹. He should never be anxious about what food he will eat or what clothes he will wear²⁰. A Christian trusts God to help him find a job and to care for his basic needs. *A Christian (being mindful of his/her own deficiencies and shortcomings) should also be content with the wife/husband God has given to him/her, including her/his deficiencies and shortcomings!*

13:6. Therefore courageously we say: The Lord (is) to me a helper; (and) I will *certainly* not fear; what will man do to me?²¹

Psalms 118:6-7. People fear when they lose God out of sight. But when they trust in God and his help their fear disappears. What can any man on earth do to take away the soul (spirit) and eternal life of a believer²²? “There is no

⁸ **13:4.** Marriage (ο γαμος)(n-nm-s) (must be) held in honour (respected)(τιμιος-α-ον)(a-nm-s) by (εν)(pd) all (πας)(ap-dm-p); and the marriage bed (η κοιτη) (n-nf-s) (must be kept) undefiled (pure in religious and moral sense)(αμιαντος-ον)(a-nf-s). For (γαρ)(cs) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) will *certainly* judge (κρινει>κρινω)(vifa--zs) the sexual immoral (ο πορνους)(n-am-p) and (και)(cc=conjunction coordinating) the adulterers (ο μοιχος)(n-am-p).

⁹ Leviticus 18:6,20,22,23

¹⁰ **13:5.** The manner of life (ο τροπος)(n-nm-s) (must be kept) without the love of money (αφιλαργυρος-ον)(a--nm-s); being *continually* content (satisfied) (αρκουμενοι<αρκεομαι)(vrppnnp) with the present things (things at hand) (παρουσιν<παρειμι)(vrpadn-p); for he (God) has said (*and his word keeps on ringing in our ears*) (ειρηκεν<λεγω)(vira--zs perfect tense): “I will by no means (ου μη)(ab+ab=adverb)(very strong negative) abandon (desert) (ανω<ανημι)(vsaa--xs) you (σε)(pnpa-ys) and also not (neither) (ουδε)(cc) by no means forsake (desert, leave you in the lurch) (εγκαταλιπω<εγκαταλειπω)(vsaa--xs) you (σε)(npa-ys).

¹¹ 2 Thessalonians 3:10

¹² Proverbs 23:4-5

¹³ Matthew 6:24

¹⁴ Luke 12:15

¹⁵ 1 Timothy 6:10

¹⁶ 1 Timothy 3:3

¹⁷ Hebrews 13:5

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:3

¹⁹ 1 Timothy 6:6-8

²⁰ Matthew 6:25-33

²¹ **13:6.** Therefore (for this reason) (ωστε)(ch=conjunction hyper/supercoordinating) ‘courageously’ (confidently) (θαρουντας<θαρρω)

(vrpaamxp) we (ημας)(npa-xp) say (λεγειν>λεγω)(vnpa): The Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s) (is) to me (εμου)(npd-xs=noun pronoun dative 1st person

singular) a helper (ο βοηθος)(ap-nm-s); (and) I will *certainly* not fear (φοβηθησομαι<φοβεομαι)(vifo--xs); what (τι)(aptan-s inTerrogative) will

man (ο ανθρωπος)(n-nm-s) do (ποιησει>ποιεω)(vifa-zs) to me?

²² Matthew 10:28

fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love”²³.

²³ 1 John 4:18

13:7-8. Christians are called to follow good examples.

a. Christians are called to follow the example of real leaders.

13:7. You *must continually* keep in mind the ones *continuously* leading you; those who spoke to you the word of God; of them *continually* scanning (observing) closely the successful outcome of the conduct. You *must continuously* imitate the(ir) faith²⁴.

The leaders are mentioned in Hebrews 13:7,17 and 24. Verse 7, 17 and 24 definitely refer to the present leaders, but verse 7 may also include the leaders in the past (Hebrews 11), because the (whole) course of their lives, from start to finish, now lies before the eyes of their followers for review and imitation.

Someone is your 'leader' when he speaks the word of God to you and sets a visible example of faith which you are able to imitate. Leaders who lack these two criteria are not your leaders, even if they demand or claim leadership on the basis of their position within an organisation (or denomination). At all times Jesus Christ is our final Leader. "We must obey God rather than men"²⁵. "A leader may not lord it over those entrusted to them"²⁶. True biblical leadership is always 'shared leadership'²⁷ and 'servant leadership'.²⁸

A church must never appoint or follow "a leader who wants to be first, gossips maliciously about other Christians, refuses to welcome other Christians and who stops those who want to do so"²⁹!

b. Christians are called to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

13:8. Jesus Christ (is) yesterday and today the same and forever.³⁰

While leaders come and go, and with this their consultation and wise guidance go, Jesus Christ never leaves, remains unchanging year after year and his teaching and guidance are continuously available.

What is said about God in the Old Testament is applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament! The words in the Old Testament: "You remain the same and your years will never end"³¹ refer to God and are applied in the New Testament to Jesus Christ³²! Also in the Old Testament God is called "the First and the Last"³³ and the New Testament applies this to Jesus Christ³⁴.

For example, yesterday, Jesus Christ offered prayers with tears in Gethsemane (5:7), today he represents his people in heaven and sympathises with their trials and weaknesses (2:18; 4:15) and for ever he prays for them (7:25).

His help, grace, power and guidance are permanently at his people's disposal. Why then should they lose heart? His priesthood is unchangeable (7:24). He never needs to be replaced and nothing can be added to his completed and perfect work of salvation.

13:9-16. Christians are called to bring true Christian sacrifices³⁵.

a. Christians are called to give up any interest in religion other than the biblical truth.

13:9. You *must never* be carried along³⁶ by all kinds and strange teachings, for (it is) (morally) good that the heart *remains* established by grace, not by (ceremonial) food; in which those eating them have no value.³⁷

²⁴ **13:7.** You *must continually* keep in mind (remember) (μνημονευετε<μνημονευω)(vmpa—yp *iMperative*) the ones *continuously* leading (ηγουμενων>ηγχομαι)(vppngm-p) you (υμων)(npg-yp); those who (οιτινες)(apnmm-p *relative*) spoke (ελλαλησαν>λαλεω) (viaa-zp) to you (υμιν)(npd-yp) the word (ο λογος)(n-am-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s); of them (ων)(apranmp *relative*) *continually* observing (scanning) closely

(looking back carefully) (αναθεωρουντες<αναθεωρεω)(vppnmp) the successful outcome (result) (η εκβασις)(n-af-s) of the conduct (way) (η αστροφη)(n-gf-s) (observing the outcome of *their* conduct). You *must continuously* imitate (μμεισθε<μεμομαι) (vmpn—yp *iMperative*) the(ir) faith (η πιστις)(n-af-s).

²⁵ Acts 45:29

²⁶ 1 Peter 5:3

²⁷ Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5

²⁸ Matthew 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:3-4

²⁹ 3 John 9-11

³⁰ **13:8.** Jesus Christ (is) yesterday (εχθες)(ab=adverb) and today (σημερον)(ab) the same (ο αυτος-η αυτη-το αυτο)(ap-nm-s) and forever (εις + ο αιων)(n-am-p).

³¹ Psalm 102:27

³² Hebrews 1:12

³³ Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 28:12

³⁴ Revelation 1:17; 2:8; 22:13

³⁵ the sacrifice of going outside the camp to bear the disgrace of Christ

³⁶ cf. Ephesians 4:14

³⁷ **13:9.** You *must never* be carried along (carried away)' (παραφερεσθε>παραφερομαι)(vmpn—yp *iMperative*) by all kinds (ποικιλος-η-ον)(a—df-p) and strange (ξενος-η-ον)(a—df-p) teachings (η διδαχη)(n-df-p), for (γαρ)(cs) (it is) (morally) good (καλος-η-ον)(a—nn-s) that the heart

(η καρδια)(n-af-s) *remains* established (strengthened) (βεβαιουσθαι<βεβαιουμαι)(vpp) by grace (η χαρις)(n-df-s), not (ου)(ab=adverb) by (ceremonial) food (το βρωμα)(ndn-p); in (εν)(pd) which (οις)(aprdn-p *relative*) those eating (partaking in) them (literally: those walking in them) (οι περιπατουντες>περιπατεω)(vppanm-p) have no value (profit) (viap—zp).

Christians are commanded not to be swept off their course by all sorts of *outlandish teachings*, like Hinduism (New Age), Buddhism, Islam and modern cults, like Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses and Scientology.

Other "*strange (false) teachings*":

- The culture in the world/your country is different than the culture in the Bible. Therefore some false teachers teach that the kingdom culture (the commands, prohibitions and teachings) in the Bible are not normative and should not be followed anymore. This is a very dangerous false teaching³⁸.
- The rejection of the fall into sin and that everyone is born with a sinful nature and in need of salvation.
- The belief in justification/salvation by good works or particular religious works.
- Dispensationalism (the Bible is divided into 7 dispensations, each with another divine principle like: (1) innocence, (2) personal conscience, (3) external government, (4) the divine covenant, (5) divine law (the age of Israel), (6) divine grace (the age of the Church), (7) divine reign (the millennial kingdom of peace). Dispensationalism teaches (1) two Books of God: the Book of Israel (consisting of the Old Testament, the Gospels and Revelation) and the Book of the Church (consisting of the Letters of Paul), (2) two nations of God (Israel and the Church), (3) two second comings of Christ (his coming/rapture for the Church and his coming with the Church or appearance for Israel), (4) several resurrections from the dead, (5) and several final judgements.
- Regeneration through baptism with water.
- Regeneration is the first blessing and baptism with the Spirit is the second blessing.
- Baptism in water must only be by immersion.
- Changing the substance of the bread and wine into the physical body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation) in the eucharist.
- Bishops, archbishops and popes are regarded as successors of the apostles.
- A particular denomination is regarded as the only true church.

All these are very dangerous false teachings!

The passage refers also to the syncretistic gnosis prevalent in Asia Minor³⁹ and Rome⁴⁰: where all kinds of food-rules, fasting and celibacy were enforced on people. But eating food or abstaining from eating food does not make a person better or worse - they never help people to maintain a closer walk with the God of the Bible⁴¹. To put such indifferent matters or external rules in a place of central religious importance would diminish the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. Not the food of religions, but the grace of Christ establishes people.

b. Christians are called to find their spiritual nourishment and refreshment only in Christ.

13:10. We have an altar (sacrifice) from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.⁴²

13:11. For of those animals the blood is *again and again* brought into the holy place by the high priest (as an offering) for sin, of these the bodies are *again and again* burned outside the camp.⁴³

During the Old Testament period the Jews had an altar and sacrifices of atonement, but the priests were not allowed to eat the flesh of animals sacrificed on the Day of Atonement or of certain sin offerings⁴⁴. The bodies of the sacrificial animals were carried outside the Israelite camp and completely burned⁴⁵. *Although the Jews had an altar, sacrifices and priests, they were never available for permanent atonement of sins and had to be repeated endlessly.* Also the other sacrifices eaten by the priests brought no profit to them (verse 9)!

In contrast, the New Testament people of God have an altar and just one sacrifice of atonement that is permanently available and never needs to be repeated! The altar was the cross and the sacrifice was the sinless body of Jesus Christ. Since that sacrifice had been brought, Jesus Christ is permanently available as the source of *spiritual new life and nourishment (refreshment)* of believers who by faith⁴⁶ feed on him in their hearts⁴⁷ (that is, who believe in him and receive him into their hearts. Christians are established and strengthened by grace and not by ceremonial food (verse 9).

³⁸ For example. What the Bible *commands, prohibits and teaches* about marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33, Matthew 19:4-6), women in church leadership (1 Timothy 2:8-14; 1 Corinthians 14:33-40), practicing homosexuals (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:21-40) etc. is certainly normative!

³⁹ Colossians 2:16-23

⁴⁰ Romans 14:17

⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 8:8; 1 Timothy 4:3-5

⁴² **13:10.** We have (εχομεν>εχω)(vipa--xp) an altar (το θυσιαστηριον)(n-an-s)(metonymy for 'sacrifice) from (εξ)(pg) which (ου)(aprgn-s = adjective pronominal *relative* genitive neuter singular) those who minister (οι λατρευοντες>λατρευω)(vppanm-p) at the tabernacle (η σκηνη)(n-df-s) have (εχουσιν>εχω)(vipa-zp) no (ουκ)(ab) right (η εξουσια)(n-af-s) to eat (φαγειν<εσθω)(vnaa)(infinitive used epexegetically, explaining what is lawful).

⁴³ **13:11.** For (γαρ)(cs) of those (ων)(a-rgn-p *relative*) animals (το ζων)(n-gn-p) the blood (το αιμα)(dnns n-nn-s) is *again and again* brought (offered)(εισφερεται>εισφερω)(invipp--zs) into (εις)(pa) the holy place (the sanctuary) (τα αγια)(danp ap-an-p) by (δια) (pg) the high priest (ο αρχιερευς)(n-gm-s)(as an offering) for (περι)(pg) sin (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-s), of these (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdgn-p *demonstrative*) the bodies (το σωμα)(dnnp n-nn-p) are *again and again* burned (κατακαιεται>κατακαιωμαι)(vipp--zs) outside (εξω)(pg) the camp (η παρεμβολη)(n-gf-s).

⁴⁴ Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:12; 8:17; 9:11

⁴⁵ Leviticus 16:27

⁴⁶ John 6:40

⁴⁷ John 6:53-58

Neither John 6 nor Hebrews 13 refer to the Lord's Supper. John 6 verse 40 explains verse 54 and refers to "looking at Jesus and believing in him" and not to "eating and drinking him in the Lord's Supper".

The physical body of Christ was given only once for all in history (and is never 'repeatedly offered' and 'physically eaten' as in the Roman Catholic mass/eucharist)⁴⁸.

In the Lord's Supper, the bread as a symbol of the body of Christ and the wine as a symbol of the blood of Christ is given and received (taken and eaten/drunk) only in a spiritual manner, by faith (and it is never changed or transubstantiated into the physical body and blood of Jesus as Roman Catholics teach)! See the original Greek and later Latin translation of Hebrews 10:11-12!

c. Christians are called to go outside the camp and bear the stigma of Christ.

13:12. Wherefore also Jesus, in order that he might *once for all* sanctify the people through his own blood, *once for all* suffered outside the gate.⁴⁹

13:13. Therefore *let us again and again* go out to him outside the camp *all the time* bearing his reproach (insult, stigma).⁵⁰

Outside the camp during the Old Testament period.

The Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting consisted of (1) the Most Holy Place (10x10x10 cubits) in which was the Ark, the Curtain and the Altar of Incense before the curtain in the Holy Place, but regarded as part of the Most Holy Place). (2) The Holy Place (20x10x10 cubits) in which was the seven-armed Lampstand and Table with the Bread of Presence. During the journey through the desert, the Levites camped with their tents around the Tabernacle. The Twelve Tribes camped with their tents around these. *The Jews had become accustomed to think of 'the camp' and all that was inside it as 'sacred', while everything 'outside the camp' was 'profane and unclean'. The Jews felt secure inside the camp (Jerusalem) amid its familiar installations. Inside the camp the Jews were insulated from the outside world.*

- During the Old Testament period the animal sacrifices were slaughtered within the camp. Only the red-heifer, which was also a kind of sin-offering, was slaughtered *outside the camp*⁵¹. It was completely burned and its ashes were mixed with water in order to ceremonially cleanse people from sin⁵².
- After Israel's idolatry with the golden calf, Moses took his tent and pitched it *outside the camp*, far off from the camp, and it was called 'the tent of testimony' and Israelites could go outside the camp and make inquiries of the LORD. Every Israelite that sought the Lord would have to go outside the camp to the tent that was outside the camp⁵³.
- After the priests Nadab and Abihu had offered unauthorised fire and incense before the Lord, fire from God consumed them and they were carried *outside the camp*⁵⁴.
- The blasphemer was stoned to death *outside the camp*⁵⁵.
- The leper Miriam was shut *outside the camp* for seven days⁵⁶.
- The scapegoat laden with the sins of the Israelites was taken as far *outside the camp* as possible⁵⁷.

Outside the camp during the New Testament period.

*'The (army) camp'*⁵⁸ in Hebrews symbolised everything Jerusalem, its religion (Judaism) and its leaders represented. It stood for the established religious fellowship and religious ordinances of Judaism.

- Already during the Old Testament period Moses regarded the stigma, that rested on God's Anointed, greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt (11:26).
- *Jesus suffering outside the camp was a token that the Jews, Jerusalem and Judaism had rejected the messianic claims of Jesus! This rejection by the Jews was a stigma, a stain/black mark on the reputation of Jesus!* The crucifixion outside the gate of Jerusalem was an added stigma. The Jews branded Jesus ceremoniously as 'unclean', politically as a traitor and criminal⁵⁹ and religiously as demon-possessed and raving mad⁶⁰.

⁴⁸ See Hebrews 1:3 and Hebrews 10:11-12

⁴⁹ **13:12.** Wherefore (δίο)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) also (καί)(ab=adverb) Jesus, in order that (ὅνα)(cs) he might *once for all* sanctify (ἀγιασῆ>αγιαζῶ)(vsaa--zs) the people (ο λαός)(n-am-s) through (δίο)(pg) his own (ἰδίοσ-ια-ιον)(a--gn-s) blood (το αιμα)(n-gn-s), *once for all* suffered (ἐπαθεν<πασχω)(via--zs) outside (ἐξω)(pg) the gate (ἡ πύλη)(n-gf-s).

⁵⁰ **13:13.** Therefore (τοῖσιν)(ch) *let us again and again* go out (ἐξέρχουμεθα>ἐξέρχομαι)(vspr--xp) to (προς)(pa) him (οὗτος-η-ον)(npamzs) outside (ἐξω)(pg) the camp (ἡ παρεμβολή)(n-gf-s) *all the time* bearing (φεροντες>φερω)(vppanmxp) his reproach (insult or stigma) (ο ονειδισμός)(n-am-s).

⁵¹ Numbers 19:3

⁵² Numbers 19:9

⁵³ Exodus 33:7-11. Contrast the New Testament situation: the LORD lives with and in the believers (John 14:16-17) and the Church (Ephesians 2:22).

⁵⁴ Leviticus 10:1-5

⁵⁵ Leviticus 24:14,23

⁵⁶ Numbers 12:14-15

⁵⁷ Leviticus 16:20-22

⁵⁸ ἡ παρεμβολή

⁵⁹ Luke 23:2

⁶⁰ John 10:20

Jesus ‘suffered’⁶¹, i.e. was crucified, outside the gate⁶². In contrast to *the ceremonial cleansing* during the Old Testament period, his ‘blood’ procured *spiritual, perfect and everlasting cleansing*. It ‘sanctified’ or ‘set his people apart’ to worship God with a purified conscience (10:10,14,29).

Now the Hebrew (and Gentile)⁶³ Christians are called to “go out of the camp to Jesus Christ” in order to also bear his stigma. The people of Christ must regard the stigma of Christ (and the stigma of being a follower of Christ) greater wealth than anything they could hope to gain by the opposite, namely, by remaining within the camp of their old religion and not committing themselves unreservedly to Christ.

In contrast to the familiar Jewish religious rituals inside the camp (the instituted and recognized religion of daily sacrifices and annual religious festivals) during the Old Testament period, Christ called his people to come to him outside the camp and share the psychological and social insecurities of being Christians in the world who do not belong to any instituted and recognized religion.

In contrast to the Jews who claimed Jerusalem inside its gates, *Christ claimed the world outside its gates. To come to Christ as a former Jew, a person must come out of the Jewish camp to Christ and give up the external Jewish religious rituals and follow Christ and his completed work of salvation⁶⁴. The future no longer lies with the small Jewish camp, but with the enormous worldwide Gentile mission of Jesus Christ and his Body outside the camp. This does not consist of a particular denomination, but of a host of pilgrims who are aliens and strangers in the world, an uncountable number of disciples of Christ from every nation in the world⁶⁵.*

Thus Christians must not take a step back into the Old Testament and join God’s Old Testament people, Israel⁶⁶, but instead take a step forward into the New Testament and join following Jesus Christ⁶⁷.

Time and again during the New Testament period, individuals and churches had to come out of their secure and familiar camps and go out to the unknown and unfamiliar world to occupy new territory under the leadership of Jesus.

d. Christians are called not to settle down, but to be pilgrims and strangers.

13:14. For here we *never* have an abiding city, but we *continually* seek after (the city which) is to come (the new Jerusalem).⁶⁸

The Jews kept in their hearts clinging to their old securities, but *these securities themselves were insecurities!* With the first coming of Jesus Christ (the Messiah), the perfect and eternal High Priest, had arrived (4:14; 7:16,24-28), terminated and replaced all other high priests. By bringing the perfect sacrifice (7:27; 10:14), the Old Testament law with its ceremonies and religious festivals *were fulfilled, cancelled, changed⁶⁹* and the old securities crashed! The curtain that separated the presence of God from the people, was torn in two⁷⁰. The middle wall of separation and hostility between Jews and Gentiles (the ceremonial law)⁷¹ was broken down and abrogated⁷². The kingdom of God was taken away from the unrepentant Jews and given to Jews and Gentiles who would bear the fruit of the kingdom⁷³. With the first coming of Jesus Christ the old order (covenant) was fulfilled and replaced by the new order (covenant)(8:6-13). The letter to the Hebrews was probably written about A.D. 64, just before the persecution of Nero against Christians in Rome broke out. The external city of Jerusalem and the temple were doomed to be destroyed soon⁷⁴. They were consequently destroyed in A.D. 70. *Thus with the first coming of Jesus Christ the old order was terminated and the new order was inaugurated!*

The writer to Hebrews said that the by leaving a ‘city’ which was doomed to pass, the Hebrew Christians would gain a ‘city with foundations whose architect and builder is God’ (11:10).

Now, at present (about 2000 years later), ‘the heavenly city’ is yet to come, but everyone (whether originally Jew or Gentile) who goes out (of the present world order and its institutions that will be shaken)(12:26-29) to Christ, is already enrolled in the heavenly register of citizens (12:23)⁷⁵. *Man cannot find ‘the permanent and eternal rest’ in any of the*

⁶¹ referring to his death: Luke 22:15; Luke 24:46; Acts 1:3; Acts 17:3; 1 Peter 2:21; Hebrews 9:26

⁶² John 19:20

⁶³ This applies also to former Muslims. They are called to go outside the instituted Muslim camp.

⁶⁴ This applies also to come out of the Hindu camp, Buddhist camp, Christian denominational camp, Muslim camp or any other religious camp or religious cult.

⁶⁵ Cf. the great commission in Matthew 28:18-20

⁶⁶ 1 Peter 2:11

⁶⁷ Luke 9:23

⁶⁸ **13:14.** For (γαρ)(cs=conjunction subordinating) here (in this place) (ωδε)(ab) we *never* (ου)(ab) have (εχομεν>εξω)(vipa--xp) an abiding (μενουσαν>μενω)(vppaaf-s) city (η πολις)(n-af-s), but we *continually* seek after (επιζητουμεν>επιζητεω)(vipa-xp) (the city which) is to come (μελλουσαν<μελλω)(vppaaf-s) (the New Jerusalem).

⁶⁹ Matthew 5:17; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12

⁷⁰ Matthew 26:51

⁷¹ And the Muslim sharia

⁷² Ephesians 2:15

⁷³ Matthew 21:42-44; Romans 11:16-24

⁷⁴ Luke 19:43-44; Luke 21:20-24; John 2:19

⁷⁵ Galatians 4:26

present institutions in the world: whether they are political, social or religious institutions. Christians are called, not to settle down, but to be pilgrims and strangers within the present world order (11:13)⁷⁶.

⁷⁶ Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 Peter 2:11

e. Christians are called to bring spiritual sacrifices.

13:15. Through him (Jesus) therefore *let us continually/again and again* offer up a sacrifice of praise through all (times) to God, that is the fruit of lips which *continually* make confession to his name.⁷⁷

13:16. But you *must never* forget the doing of good deeds and the sharing/fellowshipping with others, for with such sacrifices God is *all the time* well pleased.⁷⁸

Note the three principles of discipleship (the wheel illustration) in verse 15-16: Jesus in the centre, and the two horizontal spokes: fellowship with believers and witnessing/good deeds to non-Christians.

The Jews and Gentiles thought that ‘religion’ is only valid when there are ‘sacrifices’. The Old Testament Jews brought sacrifices prescribed by the law of Moses. In later/modern Judaism some Jews still slaughter chickens!⁷⁹ Hindus, Muslims, African and South American religions still bring blood sacrifices in their religions. They taunt Christians and call them “atheists”⁸⁰ by pointing out that Christians have no sacrifices and no altar.

Christians are called to bring the bloodless sacrifices of a grateful, joyful and dedicated heart.

- In the Old Testament order there were ‘sacrifices of restoration (peace)’ that included ‘thanksgiving’⁸¹. The Greek translation says, “If he offers it (the restoration or peace offering) for praise, then he shall bring for the sacrifice of praise loaves of fine flour ...”. This corresponds with Leviticus 7:12, where ‘the sacrifice of thanksgiving’ was accompanied by bloodless cakes and unleavened bread. The sin-offering for Christians is also their restoration or peace offering - something that was impossible under the old order.
- Already during the Old Testament period believers like Asaph and Isaiah recognized that *animal sacrifices could not really please God*⁸². They promoted the sacrifices of the lips: thanksgiving and fulfilling promises or vows and praying to God⁸³ and genuine repentance⁸⁴.
- The prophet Hosea proclaimed that Israel should return to God with sacrifices that consist of ‘the fruit of the lips’ that consisted of repentance from sins and thanksgiving for forgiveness and gracious reacceptance⁸⁵.
- Christians are called to again and again praise God (13:15).
- Christians are called to again and again confess Christ openly to people (13:15)⁸⁶.
- Christians are called to again and again do good and to share what they have with others (13:16).
- Christians are called to offer their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God⁸⁷.

⁷⁷ **13:15.** Through (δια)(pg) him (αυτος-η-ον)(npgmzs)(Jesus) therefore (ουν)(ch) *let us continually/again and again* offer up (αναφερωμεν>αναφερω)(vspsa--xp)(cohortative subjunctive) a sacrifice (η θυσια)(n-af-s) of praise (η αινεσις)(noun genitive feminine singular) through (δια)(pg) all (παντος)(ap-gm-s) (+χρονους)(time) to God (ο θεος)(n-dm-s), that is (εστιν>εμι)(vipa--zs) the fruit (ο καρπος)(n-am-s)

of lips (το χειλος)(n-gn-p) which *continually* make confession (ομολογουντων>ομολογω)(vppgm-p) to his name (το ονομα)(n-dn-s).
⁷⁸ **13:16.** But you *must never* forget (επιλανθανεσθε>επιλανθανω)(vmpn--yp)(present imperative with negative is used to forbid a habitual action) the doing of good deeds (η ευποιια)(n-df-p) and the sharing with others (the fellowshiping with other Christians) (η κοινωνια)(n-gf-s), for (γαρ)(cs) with such (τοιαυτος)(a-ddf-p *demonstrative*) sacrifices (η θυσια)(n-df-p) God (ο θεος)(ndnms n-nm-s) is *all the time* well pleased (ευαρεσεται<ευαρεστεομαι)(vipr--zs).

⁷⁹ The Gospel in the Feasts of Israel, Victor Buksbazen, 1954, p29.

(1) Atonement in later Judaism. Since the Jews have no temple, no priest and no sacrifice, the rabbis have provided the following substitutes for the sacrifice of atonement:

- Repentance, prayer and charity are regarded as the most important means of making atonement (Thus, not Christ, but man himself makes atonement).
- Sacrificing a white rooster for every male or a white hen for every female as a substitute sacrifice (called “kapparah”, an atonement or expiatory sacrifice) on the day before the Day of Atonement. The Jews express a deep need for atonement of sins through the shedding of blood. But *Jews have no understanding of any substitute sacrifice of atonement, because they keep on rejecting Jesus Christ*.
- Charity. In modern Hebrew the word “charity” or “almsgiving” is the same as the word “righteousness” (Hebrew: tsidqah).
- Suffering, especially if the Jew lives righteous.
- Self-inflicted beating with 39 stripes (called: “malqut”, stripes or punishment with lashes).
- One’s own death, wrongly based on Psalm 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”
- The study of the Law, especially the Talmud (the commentary on the Torah/Old Testament).
- Special prayers at midnight for forgiveness (called “slihot”) a whole month long before the Day of Atonement.

(2) The Jews have watered down the need of a substitute sacrifice of atonement in which blood is shed. Rabbinical Judaism has made a consistent effort to water down the importance of the sacrifices and the shedding of blood, which alone can make atonement for sins. In place of the sacrifice of atonement they have declared celebrating the Day of Atonement itself without the necessity of sacrifice to make atonement for sinners! Rabbi Amnon of Mayence (about 1100 A.D.) prayed, “As a shepherd seeks out his flock and causes them to pass beneath his crook, so do you (Lord) cause every living soul to pass ... appointing the measure of every creature’s life and decreeing their destiny.” The underlying belief of this prayer is that *atonement and forgiveness depend on whether a man’s good deeds and merits outweigh his misdeeds and demerits. This is also the teaching of all other human religions including humanism in the world: the surplus of your good deeds will save you!*

⁸⁰ In truth genuine Christians are not atheists, but are “a-religious”. They are not practicing a particular religion, but are followers of Jesus Christ.

⁸¹ Leviticus 7:2

⁸² Psalm 50:9-13; Isaiah 1:10-15

⁸³ Psalm 50:14-15

⁸⁴ Isaiah 1:16-20

⁸⁵ Hosea 14:1-2

⁸⁶ Matthew 10:32-33

⁸⁷ Romans 12:1

- Christians are called to support needy Christian workers with their possessions⁸⁸.
- Christians are called to pray for other Christians⁸⁹.
- Christians are called to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world⁹⁰.
- Christians are called to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ⁹¹.

But all these sacrifices of the lips and hands do NOT make atonement for sin! The only sacrifice that makes atonement for sin is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! All these above-mentioned sacrifices of the lips and hands are the believer's response of thanks and praise to the sacrifice which Jesus Christ alone brought!

True Christian worship is an attitude of awe, adoration, submission and dedication, expressed in different kinds of prayer and a godly lifestyle. Christianity is sacrificial through and through. It is founded on the one self-offering of Christ. The offering of his people's praise and property, of their service and their lives, is caught up into the perfection of his acceptable sacrifice, and is accepted in Christ.

13:17. Christians are called to submit to their real leaders.

13:17. You *must always* obey those who *continually* lead you and you *must always* submit (to their authority): for they *continually* watch in behalf of your souls as they that will *certainly* give an account; in order that they may *continually* do this with joy and not with *constant* sighing: for that (would be) unprofitable to you.⁹²

Your real leader is someone who speaks God's Word to you⁹³, sets an example of Christian life which you want to follow⁹⁴ (13:7) and goes without sleep in behalf of your soul (13:17)! A true leader develops you! Such leaders are accountable for the spiritual well-being of those placed under their care. This responsibility may cause them sleepless nights. The believers are called to co-operate with such leaders in order to make their task and responsibility easier and more joyful to carry out. Their responsibility should not become a burden under which they 'groan' all the time.

Perhaps the writer makes this exhortation because the Hebrew Christians kept themselves aloof from the Christians leaders of the larger Gentile Christian part of the church at Rome.

Perhaps the Christians were plagued by teachers and leaders that proclaimed new and esoteric doctrines and made such leaders look more attractive and interesting personalities than the local leaders who never taught anything 'new', but were content with the conservative line of apostolic preaching (the Bible) and had all the time taken care of their spiritual needs.

Nevertheless, true Christian leaders are those appointed according to biblical prerequisites and standards⁹⁵ and who actually teach the Word of God to you and set an example to you (13:7). The wrong leaders should not be acknowledged or followed⁹⁶!

13:18-21. Christians are called to pray.

a. Christians are called to pray for others (13:18-19)

13:18. You *must always* pray for us: for we *remain* persuaded (confident) that we *always* have a morally good conscience, desiring to *keep on* living acceptably in all (things).⁹⁷

13:19. And I exhort you more earnestly to do this, so that I may be restored back again to you the sooner.⁹⁸

The writer requests prayer. This may suggest that he occupied some position of responsibility in regard to his readers.

⁸⁸ Philippians 4:18

⁸⁹ Ephesians 6:18-19

⁹⁰ James 1:27

⁹¹ 1 Peter 2:5

⁹² **13:17.** You *must always* obey (πειθεσθε>πειθω)(vmprr—yp *iMperative*) those who *continually* lead (ηγουμεινοις>ηγεομαι)(vppndm-p *present continuous tense*) you (υμων)(npg-yp) and (και) you *must always* submit (yield or give in)(to their authority) (υπεικετε>υπεικω)(vmpa—yp *iMperative*) for (γαρ)(cs) they (αυτοι)(nprnmzp) *continually* watch (to go without sleep) (αγρυπνουσιν<αγρυπνεω)(vira--zp) in behalf of (υπερ)(pg) your souls (η ψυχη)(n-gf-p) as (ως)(cs) they that will *certainly* give (αποδωσοντες>αποδιδομι)(vrfanm-p) an account (ο λογος) (n-am-s); in order that (ινα)(cs) they may *continually* do (ποιωσιν>ποιεω)(vspra--zp) this (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdan-s *demonstrative*) with (μετα)(pg) joy (η χαρα)(n-gf-s) and (και)(cc) not (μη)(ab) with *constant* sighing (groaning) (στεναζοντες>στεναζω)(vppanm-p): for that (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο) (apdnn-s *demonstrative*) (would be) unprofitable (harmful) (αλυσιτελης-εξ)(a--nn-s) to you (υμιν)(npr-d-yp).

⁹³ Cf. 1 Timothy 3:2 "Able to teach"

⁹⁴ Cf. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 "Manage his own family well."

⁹⁵ Matthew 20:25-28; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:1-4

⁹⁶ Acts 4:15-16; Acts 5:29; 2 John 9-11; 3 John 9-10

⁹⁷ **13:18.** You *must always* pray (προσευχασθε>προσευξομαι)(vmprr—yp *iMperative*) for (περι)(pg) us: for (γαρ)(cs) we *remain* persuaded (confident)(πειθομεθα>πειθω)(vipp--xp) that we *always* have (εχομεν>εχω)(vira--xp) a morally good (καλος-η-ον)(a--af-s) conscience (η υνειδησις)(n-af-s), desiring (θελοντες>θελω)(vppanm-xp) to *keep on* living (conducting our lives) (αναστρεφεισθαι>αναστρεφομαι)(vppr) acceptably (in a manner free from objection)(καλωσ)(ab) in (εν)(pd) all (πας)(ap-dn-p) (things).

⁹⁸ **13:19.** And I exhort (παρακαλω>παρακαλεω)(vira--xs) you more earnestly (περισσοτερος)(ab *comparative*) to do (ποιησαι>ποιεω)(vnaa) this (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdan-s = adjective pronominal *demonstrative* accusative neuter singular), so that (ινα)(cs) I may be restored back again (αποκατασταθω>αποκαθιστημι)(vsap--xs) to you (υμιν)(npr-d-yp) the sooner (ταχιον>ταχυς)(arman-s = adjective pronominal *comparative* accusative neuter single / abm = adverb *comparative*).

He desires to have ‘a good conscience’ and this will be the result when he has discharged his responsibility well⁹⁹. He had tried to visit them earlier, but for unknown reasons had not been able to do so.

b. Christians should know that others pray for them (13:20-21).

13:20. Now the God of peace, who *once for all* brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus,¹⁰⁰

13:21. may he make perfect (equip) you in every good thing to the doing of his will, *constantly* working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom (be) the glory for ever and ever. Amen.¹⁰¹

The prayer is directed to ‘the God of peace’¹⁰². Perhaps there was some disunity among the (Jewish and non-Jewish) Christians at Rome. This disunity required to be healed before God would be pleased with them.

The prayer is based on the completed salvation work of ‘the shepherd of the sheep’. In the Old Testament, Moses was called the shepherd of God’s people, whom God leads up out of the Red Sea¹⁰³. In the New Testament Jesus is called the Shepherd of God’s people, whom God leads up from the dead. The ‘sea of reeds’, which Israel crossed on their way out of Egypt, is a type (illustration) in the New Testament of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ into which his people are baptised¹⁰⁴. Jesus coming up from the dead with ‘the blood of the eternal covenant’ means that his resurrection is a demonstration that the sacrifice of himself had been accepted by God and that the new covenant had been established on that basis.

The prayer is about spiritually equipping God’s people for every form of good work, thus fulfilling God’s perfect will for their lives as God works in and through them through the Spirit of the resurrected Christ. ‘To equip’ means ‘to put into a proper condition’ or ‘to make complete’.

Postscript. Hebrews 13:22-25.

13:22-23. Personal notes.

13:22. But I *continually* exhort you, brothers, you *must continually* bear with the word of exhortation: for I have *this one time* written you in few (words)(in short).¹⁰⁵

‘The word of exhortation’ refers not to Hebrews 13:1-19, but to *the whole epistle of Hebrews*. Hebrews can be read aloud within an hour. This is ‘a few words’ compared to known speeches and sermons. The writer had more to say, but this was not the time for it (5:11; 9:5).

13:23. Know that our brother Timothy has been set free (*and continues to be free*); with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.¹⁰⁶

The ‘Timothy’ is almost certainly the known Timothy, Paul’s co-worker. The word ‘release’ could refer to his release by the church to go on a missionary journey¹⁰⁷, but most probably refers to his release from an imprisonment about which we know nothing. It is quite possible that Timothy travelled from Ephesus to Rome when Paul summoned him from his final imprisonment in Rome¹⁰⁸. He might have gotten imprisoned in Ephesus or Rome on account of his association with Paul. Nevertheless, by the time this letter is written, the writer knows that he had been released. When Timothy arrives at the location of the writer, they would travel together to the readers of Hebrews.

⁹⁹ cf. 2 Corinthians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 6:3

¹⁰⁰ **13:20.** Now (δε)(cc=conjunction coordinating) the God of peace (η ειρηνη)(n-gf-s), who *once for all* brought again (ο αναγαγων<αναγω) (vraanm-s) from (εκ)(pg) the dead (ο νεκρος)(pap-gm-p) the great (μεγας-μεγαλη-μεγα)(a--am-s) shepherd (ο ποιμην)(n-am-s) of the sheep (το προβατον)(n-gn-p) with (εν)(pd) the blood (το αιμα)(n-dn-s) of an eternal (αιωνιος-α-ον)(a--gf-s) covenant (η διαθηκη)(n-gf-s), even our

(ημων)(npg-xp) Lord (ο κυριος)(n-am-s) Jesus (n-am-s),

¹⁰¹ **13:21.** may he make perfect (equip) (καταρτισαι>καταρτιζω)(voaa--zs)(optative wish) you (υμας)(nra-yp) in (εν)(pd) every (πας, παντος) (a--dn-s) good thing (αγαθος-η-ον)(ap-dn-s=adjective pronominal dative neuter singular) to (εις)(pa)(εις + το = purpose)(in order to) the (το)(dans=determiner/definite-article accusative neuter singular) doing (ποιησαι)(vnaaa) of his (αυτου)(npgmz-s) will (το θελημα)(n-an-s), *constantly* working (ποιων>ποιεω)(vppanm-s) in (εν)(pd) us (ημιν)(nrd-xp) that which is well-pleasing (το ευαρεστον)(ap-an-s) in his sight ενωπιον>η ωψις)(pg), through (δια)(pg) Jesus Christ; to whom (ω)(aprdm-s= adjective pronominal relative dative masculine singular) (be) the glory (η δοξα)(n-nf-s) for (εις)(pa) ever (τους αιωνας) (n-am-p) and ever (των αιωνων)(n-gm-p). Amen.

¹⁰² Romans 15:33; Romans 16:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23

¹⁰³ Isaiah 63:11; cf. Psalm 77:20

¹⁰⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:1-2

¹⁰⁵ **13:22.** But (δε)(cc) I *continually* exhort (παρακαλω>παρακαλεω)(vipa--xs) you (υμας)(nra-yp), brothers (ο αδελφος)(nvm-p vocative), you *must continually* bear (ανεχεσθε>ανεχω)(vmpr—yp imperative) with the word (ο λογος)(n-gm-s) of exhortation (η παρακλησις)(n-gf-s): for (γαρ)(cs) I have *this one time* written (sent a letter)(epistle) (επεστελλα<επιστελλω)(via--xs) to you (ημιν)(nrd-yp) in (δια)(pg) few (short)(words) (in short) (βραχων>βραχυς)(ap-gm-p / ap-gn-p).

¹⁰⁶ **13:23.** Know (γνωσκετε>γνωσκω)(vipa--yp) that our (ημων)(npg-xp) brother (ο αδελφος)(n-am-s) Timothy has been set free *and continues to be free* (αποελευμενον>απολυω)(vprmmam-s perfect tense); with (μεθ)(pg) whom (ου)(aprgm-s relative), if (εαν)(cs) he comes (ερχηται>ερχομαι) (vsppn--zs) soon (ταχιον)(apman-s comparative), I will see (οψομαι<ορω)(vifd--xs) you (υμας)(nra-yp).

¹⁰⁷ cf. Acts 13:3

¹⁰⁸ 2 Timothy 4:9

13:24-25. Final greetings and benediction.

13:24. You *must* greet all those *continually* leading you and all the saints (believers). Those (coming) from Italy greet you.¹⁰⁹

“Those coming from Italy’ could mean that the writer is writing outside Italy to Hebrews living in Rome and that Italian emigrants are sending their greetings to the Hebrews in Italy. But the phrase can also mean the Italians are living in Italy and are sending their greetings to Hebrews living somewhere else. The best translation is, “Greetings to you from our Italian friends”.

13:25. Grace (be) with you all.¹¹⁰

The benediction of blessing is like that in Titus 3:15. The word ‘χαρις’ can mean ‘hail’ (hallo) at the beginning of a letter and ‘farewell’ (buy-buy) at the end of a letter in the Greek letters of this time.

Addendum. The message of Hebrews.

1. Christians are called to dynamic faith and discipleship that cannot be tamed into fixed forms of Christianity.

Christians are Christians by virtue of certain definite acts of God which took place at a definite time in the past.

But these acts of God have released a dynamic force which will never allow Christians to settle down (to institutionalise, becoming a traditional church denomination set in concrete) and stick fast at any point in their pilgrim’s journey short of that ‘*divine rest*’ which God has set as the goal for all Christians. *The divine rest is always a goal to be aimed at and is never a stage which has been reached. ‘The faith once delivered to the saints’ is not something that can be caught and tamed and poured into fixed confessions, traditions, liturgies and church structures. “No one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins¹¹¹. The Christian faith continually leads Christians forth to new ventures in the cause of Christ, as God calls again and again.*

2. Christians are called to go ‘outside the camp’ of a secure form of Christianity (institutionalised Christianity) to the onward-moving Christ.

Abraham was called out of his traditional country to go to a place he knew not. His firm faith in the unchanging God made him so ready to go forth when God calls even when he did not know where God would lead him.

Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Moses all saw with their spiritual eyes the reality and presence of the invisible God and they followed him where he led them.

Christians may no longer stay at the point to which some revered teacher of the past (church reformer, church planter or church leader /pastor) has brought them, out of a mistaken sense of loyalty to him.

Christians may no longer continue to follow a certain pattern of religious activity or attitudes just because these were good enough for their fathers and is assumed would be also good for their grandchildren.

Every fresh movement of the Spirit of God tends to become stereotyped in the next generation. What we have heard with our own ears or what our fathers have told us becomes a tenacious tradition encroaching on *the allegiance which we ought to give only to Jesus Christ and his teaching in the Bible.*

When a Christian surveys the world today, he sees very much land waiting to be possessed in the name of Christ. But in order to take possession of it calls for a generous measure of *that forward-looking faith*, which the letter to the Hebrews urges his readers to have.

The Hebrew Christians were living in a time when the old cherished order (worship according to the ceremonial law) was breaking up. Attachment to these venerable traditions could help them nothing in this situation. Only attachment to the unchanging and onward-moving Christ¹¹² and his Church which he is building¹¹³ could carry them forward and enable them to face a new order with confidence and power.

- Matthew 16:18. “I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not overcome it!”
- John 10:16. “I have other sheep that are not of this (Jewish) sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.”

¹⁰⁹ **13:24.** You *must* greet (ασπασασε<ασπασομαι)(vmaδ—yp iMperative d=mid dep) all (πας, παντας)(ap-am-p) those *continually* leading (ηγουμενους>ηγεομαι) (vppnam-p *present continuous tense*) you (υμων)(npg-yp) and all (πας)(a--am-p) the saints (believers) (αγιος-α-ον) (ap-am-p). Those (coming) from (απο)(pg) Italy greet (ασπασονται>ασπασομαι)(vipn-zp) you (υμων)(npa-yp).

¹¹⁰ **13:25.** Grace (η χαρις)(dnfs n-nf-s) (be) with (μετα)(pg) you (υμων)(npg-yp) all (πας)(a--gm-p).

¹¹¹ Mark 2:22

¹¹² John 12:26

¹¹³ Matthew 16:18-19; John 10:16

- John 12:24. “Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”
- John 12:26. “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant will also be.”
- Hebrews 13:12-14. “Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Therefore let us again and again go to him outside the camp all the time bearing his reproach (insult or stigma). For here (in this world) we never have an abiding city, but continually seek after (the city which) is to come (the New Jerusalem).

Therefore, in the day when everything that can be shaken (the world in which Christians live and its forms and the various church denominations with their traditional forms as well) is being shaken before our eyes and beneath our feet, Christians should *thank God for the unshakeable kingdom (kingship of Jesus Christ in the hearts and lives of the disciples of Christ) they have inherited* - the kingdom which will endure when everything else to which people may pin their hopes disappears without even leaving a trace.