

The book of Hebrews, like most other epistles, begins with doctrine and ends with practical instruction. The principle is clear: One must have a correct picture of Christ and a right relationship with Him before taking proper actions.

Most other epistles, however, address a particular doctrinal error that has arisen among an assembly of believers: legalism in the letter to the Galatians, for example. But Hebrews contends for the very salvation of its readers. It alternates examples of the superiority of Christ to the law with severe warnings against sliding back from the very brink of saving faith. The grave danger of apostasy may be why the practical portion occupies only one thirteenth of the book – the preceding correction is too vital to cut short.

But looking back we see that the earnest warnings often conclude with a note of hope:

Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. (Heb. 6:9)

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. (Heb. 10:39)

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:28-29)

The author always tries to turn the “you” of the warning to the “we” of inclusion. Likewise, this last chapter 13 is clearly written to fellow believers so is filled with hope and confidence that those who wavered in their faith have now advanced to certain salvation. The chapter ends with this reassuring benediction: *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Questions:

1. Can you think of scriptural examples of someone unknowingly shown hospitality to an angel?
2. How does verse 8 reinforce verse 7?
3. Are there examples in our time of the strange teachings of verse 9?

4. What does it mean for Christians to go “outside the camp”?
5. Who had no city but looked forward to the city to come? What is the application to us today?
6. What sacrifice does God desire today? Why is it a sacrifice?
7. What type of leaders are described in verse 17? What could this mean in our local assembly?
8. The author calls his exhortation brief in verse 23 but of the epistles only Romans and 1 Corinthians have more chapters than Hebrews. Why do you think he author felt he could have said even more than he did?