

Hebrews 13:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. This provides update on Timothy's situation. 'Our brother Timothy' (ton adelphon hēmōn Timotheon) warmly identifies Paul's protégé as fellow believer. 'Is set at liberty' (apolelymemon, ἀπολελυμένον, 'has been released') indicates Timothy was imprisoned, probably for the gospel, and has been freed. This confirms early Christians faced real persecution requiring courage to maintain faith.

The author's plan, 'if he come shortly, I will see you' (ean tachion erchetai, opsomai hymas), shows intention to visit with Timothy. The conditional 'if' suggests uncertainty about Timothy's travel plans. This personal detail connects Hebrews to Pauline circle—Timothy was Paul's closest associate, addressed in two canonical letters (1-2 Timothy). Whether Paul wrote Hebrews is debated, but this reference confirms the author's connection to Pauline Christianity.

This illustrates early church's network of relationships spanning geographic regions. Leaders like Timothy traveled extensively, connecting communities, delivering letters, providing updates. Imprisonment for faith was common enough to be mentioned matter-of-factly. Yet the church persevered, maintained fellowship across distances, and rejoiced in believers' releases from imprisonment. This encourages modern church to maintain global connections, support persecuted believers, and rejoice when brothers and sisters are freed.

Historical Context

Timothy, from Lystra in Asia Minor, joined Paul's missionary team (Acts 16:1-3) and became trusted associate, sent on important missions to Corinth, Ephesus, and elsewhere. Paul wrote 1-2 Timothy instructing him in pastoral leadership. According to tradition, Timothy led the Ephesian church and was eventually martyred. His imprisonment mentioned here isn't recorded elsewhere in Scripture but fits the pattern of persecution faced by early Christian leaders. The plan for the author and Timothy to visit together suggests ongoing apostolic ministry despite persecution. Early Christians maintained extensive communication networks through traveling ministers carrying letters, bringing news, and strengthening churches.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Timothy's imprisonment and release encourage you about God's providence in persecution?
2. What does the early church's network of relationships teach about maintaining fellowship and support across distances?
3. In what ways can you support and celebrate with modern believers who are imprisoned for faith or recently released?

Interlinear Text

Γινώσκετε	τὸν	ἀδελφὸν	Τιμόθεον	ἀπολελυμένον	μεθ'
Know ye	G3588	that our brother	Timothy	is set at liberty	with
G1097		G80	G5095	G630	G3326
οὓς	ἐὰν	τάχιον	ἔρχηται	ὄψομαι	ὕμᾱς
whom	if	shortly	he come	I will see	you
G3739	G1437	G5032	G2064	G3700	G5209

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 3:2 (Parallel theme): And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Philemon 1:1 (Parallel theme): Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,