



**TITLE:**

We Have an Altar

**TEXT:**

*Hebrews 13:8-16*

**INTRODUCTION**

- Hebrews 12 and 13 contain Paul's concluding exhortations to the Jewish believers.
  - Exhortation in enduring sufferings.
  - Warning on apostasy.
  - Exhortations about brotherly love, marriage, and contentment.
  - Exhortation to the church members in their relation to the church leaders.

**JESUS CHRIST'S IMMUTABILITY (v.8)**

- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday (in time past), and to day (or this very day), and for ever (or for eternity).
- Jesus Christ is eternal. He has neither the beginning of days, nor end of life (Heb. 7:3) - Melchisedec is a type of Jesus Christ. His goings forth were of old, from everlasting or from the days of eternity (Mic. 5:2).
- Jesus Christ is unchanging. He is the same throughout eternity.
  - Jesus was moved with compassion (Mark 6:34).
  - Jesus has greater love for His friends (John 15:14).
  - Jesus' compassion and love never to change.
- Jesus Christ is dependable.
  - His grace, mercy, plans, counsels, and promises are all dependable.
- Jesus Christ is knowable.
  - Jesus Christ whom we see in pages of the Bible is the same Jesus today and for all eternity.
  - How well do you know Jesus Christ?
    - He is the Passover Lamb in the book Exodus;
    - He is the Kinsman Redeemer in the book of Ruth;
    - He is the Wisdom in the book of Proverbs;
    - He is the Desire of all nations in the book of Haggai;
    - He is the BRANCH in the book of Zechariah;
    - He is the image of the invisible God in the book of Colossians;
    - He is the Blessed Hope in the book of Titus;
    - He is the King of kings and Lord of lords in the book of Revelation.

**BE NOT CARRIED ABOUT WITH FALSE DOCTRINES (v.9)**

- The words "be not carried about" (μη περιφέρεσθε - mē peripheresthe) is an imperative or a command verb that means not to be carried here and there or not to be driven about. Compare Eph. 4:14.
- Be not carried about with divers (or various) and strange (or foreign) doctrines (or teaching).
- For it is a good thing that our heart be established (or firm) with grace - principles of grace.
  - This is the proper foundation of adherence to the truth.
  - If it is the head merely that is convinced, the consequence is bigotry, pride, narrowmindedness.
  - If the belief of the truth has its seat in the heart, it will be accompanied by charity, kindness, good-will to all people.
  - In such, a belief of the truth, it is a good thing to have the heart established with grace.
- Established with grace and not with meat.
  - It is better to have the heart established with grace than with the most accurate knowledge of the dietary laws. Many such rules were found in the Law of Moses, and many more had been added by the refinements of Jewish rulers and by tradition.
  - E.g., Some practice dietary law. Some churches don't celebrate Christmas.
  - Compare Rom. 14:3-6.

- Which have not profited them that have been occupied therein
  - Those whose hearts are established with meat have not profited from them.
  - E.g., Is there any benefit if you don't eat lobster and shrimp? Is there any benefit if you don't celebrate Christmas?

### **WE HAVE AN ALTAR (v.10 - 16)**

- Paul shows the difference between the altar of the Jews and the altar of the Christians.
- The altar of the Jews: they have no right to eat which serves the tabernacle (v.10).
  - For the bodies of the animals are burned without the camp (v.11).
  - Compare Leviticus 4:4-12; 15-26. This offering refers to the sin offering. Under Jewish law, no part of the sin offering was to be eaten, but all must be burnt without the camp.
- We have an altar - the cross on which Christ suffered an atoning death.
  - Jesus also suffered without or outside the gate of Jerusalem (Golgotha) - the antitype of the sin offering (v.12).
  - The purpose is that he might sanctify the people with His blood (v.12).
  - To eat of this altar is to appropriate to oneself the fruits of Christ's atoning death - that he might sanctify the people.
- Paul continues to exhort the Jewish believers not to turn away.
- What to do now? What is Paul's exhortation?
  - Let us bear Christ's reproach - the expression of disapproval or disappointment (v.13 - 14).
    - Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp. As if we were going forth with Him when he was led away to be crucified. He was put to death as a malefactor. He was the object of contempt and scorn. He was held up to derision and was taunted and reviled on His way to the place of death, and even on the cross.
    - Let us identify ourselves with Him and be subject to similar shame and reproach - bearing His reproach.
    - Why? For here on Earth, we have no continuing city (v.14). We are just pilgrims on Earth. We seek one to come - we seek heaven.
    - Our life here on Earth is a life of reproach. If not, maybe you are not living for Jesus or standing for the truth. Maybe you are not taking up Christ's cross daily.
- Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.
  - Let us offer (v.15).
    - We don't have a physical altar like the altar of the Jews. But "by Him (Jesus Christ)" therefore, we can offer sacrifices to God.
    - What to sacrifice? It is not an animal sacrifice but:
      - Sacrifice of praise (v.15).
        - That is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
        - You can offer a sacrifice of praise through the singing in the church. The recipient of our spiritual songs is the Lord. Compare Eph. 5:19. Singing to the Lord should not only be done in the church.
        - You can offer a sacrifice of praise through a prayer of thanksgiving.
        - How do you give importance to the singing in the church? Do you sing to the Lord in your personal devotion? Does your prayer contain the giving of thanks?
      - Sacrifice of doing good and communicating (v.16).
        - By doing good to others, you can offer a well-pleasing sacrifice to God.
        - By communicating (to impart or share with others what we have), you can offer a well-pleasing sacrifice to God.
    - God is never pleased with external and religious sacrifices.