

August 18, 2013

WE HAVE AN ALTAR
Hebrews 13: 9-14

Let's start our reading in Hebrews 13: 7-8 **“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.**

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

Paul exhorts the readers of his epistle to remember them who have preached the Gospel unto them. **Follow** their faith and consider the manner (manner) of their conversation (life, even unto death). **What** was that manner? Verse 8.

Look at Hebrews 13: 9 **“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”**

The word divers means various. **It has** to do with the many (so very many) different ideas men have about God, about Christ, about salvation, about why this world exists. **The** only ideas that matter are those backed up by the Word of God.

The word strange means strange to the Word of God. **One** of its definitions is new, unheard of. **God** taught Adam HOW fallen humanity was to approach God. **Cain** immediately introduced strange doctrine. **One** of the most popular strange doctrines of our day is the IDEA that many will perish for whom Christ died (thereby refuting the truth of salvation by Christ's death ALONE).

“It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.” This (of course) speaks of TRUE grace, FREE grace. **And**, it is contrasted with hearts that are established with meats (anything ELSE gaining/maintaining salvation). **Such** hearts are void of grace.

Look at Hebrews 13: 10 **“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.”**

An altar is where you place what you expect God to receive you based on. **I.e. When** you come to God with an offering or to worship you EXPECT that God will accept and receive you. **What** is the BASIS of such expectation? **It is** whatever is on your altar. **The** altar is what sets the sacrifice apart and gives it value. **In O.C.** the altar is what held the sacrifice by which sinners were accepted. **In verse 10** we have a strong CONTRAST. **It speaks** of SOME who have an altar. **And**, it speaks of SOME who have no right to eat of THAT altar. **WE** (who have this altar) are those whose hearts are established with grace. **WE** are those who restore WHOLE salvation in Christ ALONE. **WE** eat/feed from OUR altar. **We** are sustained by OUR altar. **OUR** altar is Christ. **He** is the God-man. **His** deity gives INFINITE value to everything He does. **We** come to God based on Christ's imputed righteousness ALONE and EXPECT to be accepted in accordance with God's Word.

Look at I Corinthians 10: 17 “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” That One bread is Christ (the bread of life).

Why do SOME have ðno rightö to OUR altar? Because THEY ðserve the tabernacleö. I.e. THEY are ðpartakersö of (They feed from and are sustained by) ANOTHER altar.

Look at I Corinthians 9: 13 “Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?”

We can see how the priests ðserved the tabernacleö and were ðpartakers of the altarö they served. But, ðserving the tabernacleö is not limited to the priests under the Mosaic Covenant. This term applies to ANYONE in ANY generation who finds acceptance with God or who finds spiritual nourishment in anything but the body and blood of the Lord, Jesus Christ. We will get a better understanding as we look on.

Look at Hebrews 13: 11 “For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.”

This verse provides an explanation for the CONTRAST spoken of in verse 10. It is alluding to the (specific) sacrifice which was offered under the Mosaic Covenant by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. To understand this we need to understand the law of the ðsin offeringö. First, look at the ðsin offeringö in general.

Look at Leviticus 6: 25,26, 29 “Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: it is most holy.

26 The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

29 All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy.”

This is spoken of ORDINARY sin offerings (daily, throughout the year). The priests who offered it and the males of his household were to eat of this offering.

The priests were those who ðwaited on that altarö. They are typical of the church (those in every generation who wait on the Lord). And, their eating of this offering made them ðpartakers of the altarö on which it was offered. The blood of their sacrifice gave them access to God. It enabled them to worship God. And the body of their sacrifice nourished them (physically and temporally).

But, the sin offerings (specific) offered on the Day of Atonement (one for the priest, another for the people) were NOT to be eaten.

Look at Leviticus 6: 30 “And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.”

This is referring to the (specific) ðsin offeringö that was offered on the Day of Atonement. This sacrifice was NOT to be eaten. It was to be burned OUTSIDE the city.

Look at Leviticus 16: 27 “And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.”

Let’s be sure we understand this TYPE. **Throughout** the year, when the õsin offeringö was sacrificed, its blood was sprinkled on the altar to make atonement for the altar. **Its** fat was burned on the altar for a õsweet smelling savorö to God. **And**, its flesh was eaten by the priests who provided the service. **The** priests were nourished by the sacrifice. **They** were partakers of the altar they served.

But, on the Day of Atonement, once a year, when the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies, with the blood of the õsin offeringö, there was an important distinction made. **The** flesh of that sacrifice whose blood made atonement in the Holy of Holies, the flesh of that sacrifice was NOT eaten. **In its ENTIRETY** it was carried outside the camp and burned.

What all this is teaching us is what we will learn as we continue our study. **First**, the teaching here is setting forth a TYPE of Christ.

EVERYTHING commanded in the Mosaic Covenant was designed to picture and typify some aspect of the Person, the Offices and the Work of the Lord, Jesus Christ. **THIS** type (in our text) is just one of the particulars. **Christ** was ALWAYS the Messiah who would come (God in human flesh) and fulfill all the pictures and types. **He was** ALWAYS the One who would come and abolish that Covenant by way of fulfillment.

Look at Hebrews 13: 12 “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”

“Wherefore” is referring back to verse 11 and means õin the same mannerö. **Christ** is the antitype. (I.e. He is the answer to; He is the fulfiller of EVERY type.) **Christ** told those of His generation that He would õfulfillö ALL the law.

Look at Matthew 5: 17-18 “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

Christ is talking about His own fulfillment of the law in its demand for obedience, as well as, all that pictured and typified Him in that Mosaic Covenant.

Christ did not make His sacrifice in the Tabernacle. He did not make His sacrifice on the altar in the temple. **Nor** did He need (another) to present His sacrifice to God. **Christ** is the fulfiller of ALL types. **His** sinless (spotless) humanity was His sacrifice. **His** infinite deity was the altar that set His sacrifice apart and gave it infinite value. **He is** the high priest who offered it to God.

His blood did not give Him access into the ðholy of holiesö. Christø blood gave Him access into heaven itself (into the very presence of God).

Look at Hebrews 9: 14 “**How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”**

Look back at Hebrews 13: 12 “**Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.**” (middle phrase later)

Golgotha (where Christ was crucified) was a hill OUTSIDE the gates of Jerusalem. He ðsuffered without the gateö for two reasons: **First**, in order to answer (fulfill) the types in the Old Covenant.

By ðsuffering without the gateö, Christ separated Himself from that Covenant. He fulfilled all the pictures and types under that Covenant, fulfilling His own prophecy that we read earlier in Matthew 5, ðTill heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Christ separated Himself from the sacrifices under the Mosaic Covenant, ðsuffering without the gateö. **And**, He abolished that Covenant by way of fulfillment.

There was a clear sign that the Mosaic Covenant was abolished right after Christ surrendered His life to His Father.

Look at Matthew 27: 50-51 “**Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.**

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;”

The Holy Spirit testified concerning the veil in the temple.

Look at Hebrews 9: 6-8 “**Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.**

7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

8 ¶ The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:”

The ðholiest of allö is heaven itself. **When** Christ entered heaven itself with His own blood, He fulfilled all the types of the Mosaic Covenant and that Covenant was abolished by way of fulfillment. **That** is the first reason He ðsuffered withoutö.

We see another reason Christ suffered ðwithout the gateö. **There** is another reason that Christ fulfilled and abolished the Mosaic Covenant?

Look back at Hebrews 13: 12 “**Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.**”

“Sanctify means to ðset apartö. It means to make ðholyö. Christ’s blood ðsanctified His peopleö.

Look at Hebrews 10: 10-14 “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

Christ’s blood removed all (legal) guilt and defilement from those He represented. **And**, it set them apart unto holiness, unto unblameableness, unto infinite, unchangeable righteousness. **I.e.** His blood answered every demand of God’s justice against those He died for and provided them a righteous by which God is just to declare them eternally righteous in His sight.

The goal of Christ’s ðsuffering without the gateö was IN ORDER THAT He might provide His people something the law of Moses could not provide them.

Look at Romans 8: 3-4 “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

What is it the law could not do? The law could not end a sinner’s condemnation. It could not end his (legal) liability to punishment. It could not end God’s just demand for the eternal death of every soul that sins. **And**, the law could NOT provide sinners a righteousness based upon which God could declare them righteous in His sight. **I.e.** The law could not provide a sinner justification.

Look at Acts 13: 38-39 “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

The law could not end a sinner’s condemnation or provide righteous. **But**, Christ’s death did both. The sins of those Christ died for are ðpurgedö (i.e. they are washed clean).

Look at Hebrews 1: 3 “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

There is no condemnation (no liability to punishment) to those who are in Christ. They are not facing the slightest possibility that God’s Justice will ever demand their (eternal) death. They have already suffered the equivalent of eternal death in the Person of Christ, their Substitute.

Also, Christ’s blood did not make redemption a POSSIBILITY. His blood ðobtained redemptionö.

Look at Hebrews 9: 12 “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

Christ ðsuffered without the gateö in order to provide His people that which would deliver them from the eternal death they deserved and provide an infinite righteous which would sustain them (not temporarily as the sacrifices under the Old), but eternally.

Christ is the bread of life. **His** flesh is meat indeed and His blood is drink indeed.

Look at John 6: 48-50 “I am that bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.”

Look at John 6: 53b-55 “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”

Of course, Christ is not talking about (literally) eating His flesh or drinking His blood. **Christ’s** blood satisfied the justice of God. **His** flesh and blood provide the righteousness that sustains His people thru all eternity. **He** put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. **And,** He brought forth the righteousness by which God is Just to Justify (otherwise) ungodly sinners.

Eating His flesh and drinking His blood is finding ALL your confidence in what Christ ACCOMPLISHED in His death for those He was given.

The priests under the Mosaic Covenant (representative of the people of God) were sustained (in a temporal way) by the flesh and blood of the (daily) sin offering. **The** blood of their sacrifice sprinkled on the altar atoned for the altar and made their sacrifice acceptable to God. **The** flesh of their sacrifice provided them (daily) nourishment. **But,** all that was a TYPE.

More is needed for sinners to be sustained (eternally). **ETERNAL** acceptance and **ETERNAL** nourishment require the infinitely valuable body and blood of the God-man. **It** requires the righteousness Christø obedience unto death established charged (imputed) to you.

Christ ðsuffered without the gateö, **FIRST** in order to fulfill all that pictured and typified Him in the Mosaic Covenant. **And,** He ðsuffered without the gateö, **SECOND** in order to ðsanctify His people with His own bloodö. **He** answered every demand of Godø justice against His people and provided them the (one) righteousness based upon which God is just to declare them forever righteous in His sight.

Look at Hebrews 13: 13 “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

To worship Christ sinners must leave the Mosaic Law (in all its aspects). **We** must leave the religion of requirements and conditions (which religion is just an extension of the Law). **The** salvation of God is salvation in which Christ has met ALL conditions. **The** Word of God does not

command sinners to DO (anything) in order TO BE saved. **But**, come to Christ; find grace; find the salvation in Christ ALONE.

Based on Christ's perfect work, let US leave the law. **Let** US leave the religion of requirements and conditions. **Let** US go forth unto Christ outside THAT camp. **Let** US bear His reproach. **Reproach** is shame. **It is** disgrace.

Look at Hebrews 12: 1-2 **“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,**

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Christ died a horrible and shameful death. **He died** between two thieves in what was perhaps the worst form of death ever invented by men. **And**, He despised the shame of it. **But**, He endured it because of the three-fold joy that was set before Him: **His** Father's glory. **His** own preeminence. **The** salvation of His people.

“The race that is set before US (Christ's people) is to look to Him, take up His Cross and declare the Gospel of His accomplished salvation to the world in our generation. **We** will bear shame for that. **Our** friends and families will despise our message. **They** won't despise US. **That** would be unchristian. **They** will despise our message. **But**, we will continue to declare it, because it honors God. **It** exalts Christ. **And**, it excludes boasting in sinners. **And**, it is the ONLY message that does.

Listen to what the Apostle Peter said. 1 Peter 4: 12-14 **“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:**

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”

Look at Hebrews 12: 14 **“For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”**

Under the law of Moses the worship of God was confined to one city, Jerusalem. **That** is where the temple was. **That** is where the altar was. **That** is where the sacrifice was made. **But**, all that distinction was done away in Christ.

God is worshipped and Christ is exalted wherever the Gospel is preached. **True** believers are seeking heaven itself based on the merits of Christ's work alone. **Like** Abraham of old, we look for a city whose builder and maker is God.

In closing look back at Hebrews 13: 10 **“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.”**

Those of us who have come to Christ in true faith find all our acceptance before God in the doing and dying of Christ. **Our** salvation is gained and maintained by His imputed righteousness ALONE. **We** have been delivered from serving the tabernacle. **I.e.** We have gone outside THAT gate having been delivered from thinking that any part of our acceptance with God comes from

anything found IN us or done BY us. **We** have seen the idolatry and dead works of such thinking and repented. **That** is why we can be insistent that (verse 10).

Come to THIS altar. **Find** your confidence in the imputed righteousness of Christ alone. **In doing** so you can be assured that when Christ comes again, He will be coming to take you to the final glory He earned for you when He suffered without the gate. **We** have an altar.

By Mark Pannell