

Series: Hebrews

Lesson #: 69

Title: WE HAVE AN ALTAR

Scripture: Hebrews 13: 10

Date: 3-08-09

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, New Jersey

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. 10: We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

WE HAVE AN ALTAR

I. Who does "we" refer to?

- A. Those not carried about with divers and strange doctrines
- B. Those whose heart is established with grace
- C. Those whose faith rests in Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.

II. What is our Altar?

A. First, what it is not.

1. Not the cross--the cross was an instrument of execution like an electric chair, or a needle for lethal injection, or a gun used by a firing squad or stones used throughout scripture--I would no more remember my Lord by such a misrepresentation than I would use a cancerous tumor to remember my grandfather who died of cancer.
2. Not your heart--we must be sincere but only the blood of Christ makes us accepted with God, we do not trust our sincerity for acceptance but our sincerity rests in Christ in whom we are accepted
3. Not a piece of furniture in a church building--not the table on which the bread and wine are placed (table of remembrance not a table of sacrifice); not a place at the front of the church where preachers call men in order to profess Christ.

THOSE THINGS ARE TEMPORAL, FLESHLY, IDOLS USED TO APPEAL TO THE CARNAL EYE. THE TEXT HERE IS TEACHING US PLAINLY THAT ANY WHO PUT ANY SIGNIFICANT MEANING ON SUCH MATERIAL THINGS ARE NOTHING LESS THAN IDOLATORS. WE HAVE NO SUCH ALTAR. THOSE WHO SERVE IN SUCH FLESHLY CARNALITY HAVE NO RIGHT TO EAT AT THE BELIEVER'S ALTAR.

B. The believer's Altar is not a what, but a Who--our Altar is Christ.

Hebrews 10: 1: For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things...

I want to show you 13 types of Christ which we see by looking at the altar used in the law of Moses. From Adam to Moses the patriarchs were commanded of God to build altars.

Turn to **Exodus 20: 24: An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.**

1. The only ones to whom God gave directions concerning an altar were his peculiar people. From the patriarchs throughout the old covenant dispensation the only people who had an altar were the people whom God choose to have it. All who come to Christ the Altar are God's elect, chosen by God. By Divine choice, God's mercy and grace gives the believer the right to come to Christ our Altar.

2. It was through the Altar that God said, **in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.** Christ is the Altar in whom God came unto us and blessed us. We can only come to God through the Altar--through his Sacrifice--through our High Priest--through Christ.

Exodus 20: 25: And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

3. If a man lifted up his tool upon it, he polluted it. As we will see in a moment, the altar in the tabernacle was made of "shittim wood" because it was a wood which was resistant to rot and deterioration. Christ is the Altar born of a virgin, of the Holy Spirit, not of Adam. Therefore none of the pollution of the first man, Adam or of our own pollution is in Christ our Altar--he is holy and pure.

Exodus 10: 26: Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

4. Coming to God's altar up steps was like approaching by the steps of your own works and effort. There is no work to be done by you to come to Christ. That is what coming to the altar typified--the acceptance is not by your work, but through Christ our Altar. Attempt to come up by your steps and thy nakedness shall be discovered--come to Christ empty handed and no shame shall be found in you.

Turn to **Exodus 27: 1--(this was the altar in the tabernacle) 1: And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof *shall be* three cubits.**

5. Foursquare in the scriptures speaks of fullness. In Christ is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and ye are complete in him.

Exodus 27: 2: And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same:

6. The altar had horns on four sides. Horns represented strength. Guilty men would flee to the altar and lay hold of the horns of the altar begging for mercy and forgiveness. Christ is the Strength of forgiveness for the believer. Flee and lay hold of the Strength of Christ our Altar.

Exodus 27: 2:...and thou shalt overlay it with brass.

7. Brass is what gave the altar its beauty. Christ is not only a man but he is God, the Son of God.

Exodus 27: 6: And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. 7: And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it.

8. During these days, the tabernacle was often moved. The altar had rings with staves so it could be carried everywhere the people went. Christ our Altar is with the believer all the time.

Turn to **Leviticus 6: 14: And this is the law of the meat offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the LORD, before the altar. 15: And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meat offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour, even the memorial of it, unto the LORD.**

9. Our text speaks of eating at the Altar--this is what is specifically referred to. Christ is himself the Offering, as well as the High Priest and the Altar.

Ephesians 5:2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

We approach God in Christ our Altar that his sweet savor might come up to God for a memorial unto the LORD.

10. The fire from off the altar consumed the sacrifice. Christ bore the fiery wrath of God but he consumed the fire of God's wrath and his offering came up to God as a sweet savour ever to be remembered by the LORD of hosts.

Romans 8: 1: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Leviticus 6: 16: And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it. 17: It shall not be baken with leaven. I have given it unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering. 18: All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire: every one that toucheth them shall be holy.

11. Not only is Christ the Portion of sweet savor unto the LORD but he is our portion as well. Notice that Aaron the High Priest AND his sons, the priests, ate at this Altar in the holy place--not the most holy--but the High Priest ate with his priest, his sons, in the court of the congregation.

The High Priest is Christ. His sons are the children that he has made priests unto God. Remember how God said I will come unto thee and bless thee at the altar. The altar was the first thing you saw and the last thing you saw in that outer court. As we meet here, not yet in heaven in the holiest of holies with him, Christ is the Altar we come to from beginning to end AND he comes to us as we worship him. And wherever we are Christ our Altar meets with us and we partake of his blessings to us with us.

Leviticus 6: 16: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten...17: It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it *unto them for their portion of my offerings made by fire; it is most holy, as is the sin offering, and as the trespass offering.*

12. We eat at this Altar, bringing not the leaven of our works, but trusting Christ our Sacrifice alone for our entire acceptance with God. He is most holy--our sin offering and trespass offering.

Leviticus 6: 18: All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it. *It shall be a statute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire: every one that toucheth them shall be holy.*

13. Notice what he says of those who eat at this Altar and of this our portion--*everyone that toucheth them shall be holy.* The altar sanctified the gift, or sacrifice, placed on it. Christ our Altar sanctifies--makes us and our sacrifice of praise most holy--acceptable to God.

Matthew 23: 19: *Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?*

I Peter 2: 5: *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

REVIEW:

I. "WE" HAVE AN ALTAR--believers have an Altar;

II. CHRIST IS OUR ALTAR--do you trust Christ and not the leaven of your works--Christ is the believer's Altar;

III. WE HAVE AN ALTAR, WHICH THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO EAT THAT SERVE THE TABERNACLE.

Are you yet earthy, serving an earthly tabernacle, occupying your time in meats--observance of days, and seasons, and certain meats, and ceremonies? Touch not, taste not, handle not?

We who worship God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh and we have an altar, Christ Jesus, which they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle.

