

How Can We Avoid Being Led Astray By False Teaching?

[Hebrews 13:8-10](#)

Hebrews, Day 53

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.

- Hebrews 13:8-10

Have you ever been behind a car that was wandering in its lane, perhaps even crossing over the line toward the shoulder or into another lane? Do you ever wonder what's distracting the driver? Cars that wander are driven by distracted drivers, drivers whose eyes have been taken off the task in front of them and diverted onto something else. In the Christian life, believers who wander from the gospel into false teachings have taken their eyes off Jesus and have become distracted by something else.

The author of Hebrews has been laboring throughout his masterful letter to bring believers back to a strong focus on Jesus. The recipients of this letter had become distracted. Persecution and difficulties had pressured them into seeking social conformity above gospel faithfulness. They were in danger of drifting away from Christ back into a Christ-less Judaism, grounded in the ceremonial law and Levitical worship.

How does the author of Hebrews address their distraction? He reminds them that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He then warns them against being drawn away from Christ by "*diverse and strange teachings.*" What is the substance of these diverse and strange teachings? It seems clear they had to do with the ceremonial sacrificial system of old covenant worship.

Under the old covenant, worshipers who brought an offering to the Tabernacle gave their sacrifice and then received part of it back, which they then ate. Thus, they ate from the altar of burnt offerings. Yet it was never this sacrificed meat which strengthened their souls. Those who believed they were strengthened in their spirits because they ate the meat of a sheep or an oxen that had been offered on the altar were mistaken. That's never been the source of spiritual blessing for God's people.

God's people have always been strengthened by God's grace. The offerings on the altar were always pictures pointing beyond themselves to Jesus, the source of all of God's grace. So, the author of Hebrews reminds these believers about our superior position - "*We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.*" What does he mean? It's tempting to see this as a reference to the Lord's Supper, but that's not a sacrifice, and the worship of Christians today has no physical altar. No, he is referring to the heavenly altar, and even to Christ Himself, who feeds us with Himself when we come to Him in faith.

What false teachings threaten to distract you today? Is it the prosperity gospel with its unbiblical emphasis on material and physical abundance? Is it the moralistic humanism that says we're all basically good people, and so we should just be nice and do good? Is it political activism, in either in its left-wing or right-wing variety?

Satan distracts God's people with a myriad of lesser substitutes for Christ. If we understand his tactics, we can see that the cure for all false teaching distractions is, in essence, the same: a renewed focus on Christ and Christ alone. Not material prosperity but Christ. Not do-good morality, but Christ. Not politics and power, but Christ. And not the Christ of our imaginations, but the Christ of the Bible and the biblical gospel.

Our sinful hearts, the sinful world, and the enemy of our souls all want to keep us from the only One who can save us. We defeat them by relentlessly returning again and again to Jesus.