

The Book of

Hebrews

מֵאֲנִישׁ מִנֵּמֵ דָא מִן תְּ אִקְלָא
צִמְאֵל לְ נִתְאַתְצֵרְחָ דְרִתְסֵנִ סִק
אֵת פִּקְלָא תְ סֵנִ סֵרְבָאֵל
רֵךְ תֵּא סֵךְ תֵּאקְסֵנִצֵ דְמִמִּצֵ
תֵּאֲתַפְלֵשׁ נִ תֵּרְדֵנָה רֵפֵרֵ נִ רֵלֵד
תֵּאֲגֵשׁ רֵלֵד מֵלֵלֵצֵ סֵס תֵּלֵשׁ



Outline of Hebrews

“Jesus is Better”

- I. Jesus Is Better Than the OT Prophets (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus Is Better Than the Angels (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus Is Better Than Moses (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Jesus’ Priesthood Is Better Than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)
- V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)
- VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)**

Outline of Hebrews

VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)

- A. Practical Expressions of Love in the Church (13:1-6)
- B. Remember Your Leaders and Suffer with Jesus “Outside the Camp” (13:7-16)
- C. Final Words (13:17-25)

Remember Your Leaders and Suffer with Jesus “Outside the Camp” (13:7-16)

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.

Remember Your Leaders and Suffer with Jesus “Outside the Camp” (13:7-16)

¹² So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³ Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴ For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. ¹⁵ Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

⁷ ***Remember your leaders***, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

- Three times in this chapter mention is made of their “*leaders*”:
 - In v. 17 they are told to ***obey them***;
 - In v. 24 they are asked to ***convey*** the writer's ***greetings to them***;
 - ***Here*** they are exhorted to “*remember*” them.
- In vv. 17 and 24 the reference is plainly to leaders who are ***still alive and active***.
- ***Here*** the reference seems rather to be to those who led them in ***earlier days*** but have now completed their service.

⁷ *Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.*

- Since these former leaders are no longer around, their entire lives are now on display for the readers (who were their disciples) to “*consider*” and to “*imitate*”.
- By their ***teaching*** and their ***example*** these former leaders showed the readers how they ought to live a faithful Christian life.
- Though ***they*** are ***dead***, their lives still speak volumes, and the ***memory*** of their faith is ***still alive*** in those who knew them.

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

- In chapter 11 the faith of men and women in ***earlier generations*** was presented as an example to be followed.
- But the ***memory*** of a life that we have ***seen*** is ***more vivid*** than the ***record*** of a life that has come to us ***only by reading or hearing***.
- Those leaders who had ***planted*** this community of Christians and ***fostered it*** by the ministry of the “***word of God***” and their example of faith, had faithfully run their race to the end.
- And what ***they*** had done, their ***followers*** could do also.
- We can’t assume that these former leaders suffered ***martyrdom***; but one thing we ***do*** know: like the heroes listed in chapter 11, they “***died in faith***.” (Heb 11:13)

⁸ *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

- Though their former leaders had **died** and lived on in the **memory** of those who had known them, they were **no longer available** for consultation and wise guidance as they once had been.
- Jesus Christ, **by contrast**, is **always** available: he is unchanging changing from year to year, “*the same yesterday and today and forever.*”
- A very similar statement is made in Heb 1:12 where the words of Ps 102:27 were applied to Jesus: “*But you are the same, and your years will have no end.*”
- These words, in their **original** context, were addressed to the God of Israel.

⁸ *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

- And this is not the **only** instance in which we find such a seamless transition of a reference from the Father to the Son.
- For example:
 - The phrase: *“I am the first and I am the last”* is used to describe the **Father** in the Old Testament (Isa 41:4; 44:6)
 - This **same language** is applied to **Jesus** in the New Testament without any sense of contradiction (Rev 1:17; 2:8; 22:13).

⁸ *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

- Jesus' help – his grace, his power, and his guidance – is ***always*** available to his people.
- Why then should we lose heart?
- Others serve their generation by the will of God for a time and then pass on; “*but [Jesus] holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.*” (Heb 7:24).
- He ***never*** needs to be replaced, and ***nothing*** can be added to his perfect work.

⁹ ***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.***

- The readers should stay true to the teachings given by their former leaders (i.e., the ones mentioned in verse 7) and not be “*led away*” by teachings that are contrary to the message that they communicated.
- The identity of these “*strange teachings*” is, at first glance, uncertain.
- But as the author unfolds his argument in subsequent verses, it’s clear he refers to teachings derived from the OT law.
- What the author says here is in keeping with the main purpose of this letter where the author has ***repeatedly*** warned his readers not to embrace the old covenant and its system of worship and dietary laws.

⁹ *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.*

- Earlier in the letter, “*foods*” were linked to “*gifts and sacrifices*” offered in the tabernacle that “*cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper*” (Heb 9:9-10).
- Here our author makes a similar statement: these “*foods... have not benefited those devoted to them.*”
- The original hearers, Jewish Christians long immersed in the practices of the OT sanctuary, may have been **shocked** to hear those familiar rites called “*diverse and strange.*”
- Our author calls them “*strange*” because they treat regulations that God ordained only “*until the new order [i.e., new covenant] came*” (Heb 9:10 NET) as though they were intended to **continue** – even though Christ has come as the final **fulfillment** of those OT practices.

⁹ *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.*

- Now that Christ has inaugurated the **new** covenant and has rendered the first covenant “*obsolete*” (Heb 8:13), to return to old covenant institutions is to **contradict** God’s agenda for redemptive history.
- Our author used **similar** shocking language when he implied that losing faith in Jesus and returning to the comforting familiarity of Judaism would be nothing less than “*[falling] away from the living God*” (Heb 3:12).
- What **now** strengthens “*the heart*” is God’s “*grace*,” received through faith in Jesus.
- By God’s “*grace*” Jesus tasted death on behalf of every believer (Heb 2:9), so that through him we can draw near to God’s throne of “*grace*” to find “*grace*” (Heb 4:16).

¹⁰ *We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.* ¹¹ *For the **bodies of those animals** whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned **outside the camp.***

- Here our author returns to a familiar theme: the **typological** relationship between:
 - The sacrificial ritual of the levitical priesthood
 - The sacrifice of Christ.
- His first point here is that those who **continue** in that outmoded sacrificial system **cannot** partake of the **true and final** sacrifice provided by Christ.
- This point is confirmed typologically in that the “*bodies of those animals*” whose blood was offered as a sin offering were to be burned “*outside the camp*” (see Lev 4:21; 16:27).

¹⁰ *We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.* ¹¹ *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.*

- Just as the priests could not eat of those sacrificial animals, so they now cannot partake of the sacrifice which those animals foreshadowed.
- Those who minister at “*the tent*” (the tabernacle) therefore may not “*eat*” from this new “*altar*”.
- When talks here about those who “*eat*” (or “*have no right to eat*”) from this “*altar*” which “*we have*”, he is describing, in a **figurative** way, those who partake of the benefits of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

¹⁰ *We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.* ¹¹ *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.*

- In other words, those still operating under the old system, “*have no right to*” receive the salvation benefits provided by the sacrifice of Christ since they have, in essence, rejected Christ by continuing to practice those OT rituals.
- This was true of the priests and the high priest who insisted on continuing to offer these OT sacrifices, but by implication this was also true of *anyone* who participated in their work.

¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.

- So, for the readers to return to Judaism would mean the forfeit of the benefits of Christ's work.
- They, like the priests, would be excluded from partaking of the altar, that is, the work of Christ.
- This argument will lead in verse 13 to the appeal to leave Judaism behind.

¹² *So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.* ¹³ *Therefore let us go to him **outside the camp** and bear the reproach he endured.*

- Reference to the burning of the bodies of the sacrificial animals “*outside the camp*” leads to a further interesting typological parallel.
- Jesus suffered “*outside the [city] gate.*”
- The crucifixion – that fulfillment of the OT sacrifices wherein he made the people holy through his own blood – took place outside the city walls (John 19:20; cf. Matt 21:39).

¹² *So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.* ¹³ ***Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.***

- This analogy is now given an application to the readers in the author's exhortation to join Jesus "*outside the camp*".
- That is, they are called to leave behind the security and comfort of Judaism and in so doing to "*bear the reproach*" he bore (RSV: "bear the abuse he endured," cf. Heb 12:2).
- The readers are called to endure the persecution that will come their way when they remain true to their Christian faith.
- This exhortation is basically a restatement of the author's concern for the readers expressed ***throughout*** the book (e.g., Heb 2:1; 3:12; 4:11; 6:4ff.; 10:35; 12:3).

¹⁴ *For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.*

- Another way the author expresses the kind of commitment he is asking of his readers is by emphasizing the ***transitory character*** of all earthly cities: here on earth we do not have a “*lasting city*.”
- Like Abraham, and ***all*** Christians, the readers are to seek a “*lasting city*” – “*the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*” (Heb 11:10; cf. 11:16).

¹⁴ *For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.*

- To be sure, through the fulfillment brought by the finished work of Christ, they have, ***in a sense, already*** come to that city:
 - *But you **have come** to Mount Zion and to the **city** of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...* (Heb 12:22)
- Yet although, in a sense, their coming to this city is a present reality – their ***final*** coming to this city remains an expectation of the ***future***.
- So, here again we see the “already but not yet” idea found so often in scripture.

¹⁴ *For here we have no lasting city, but we seek **the city that is to come.***

- Like those listed in the “hall of faith” in chapter 11, the readers are to live in anticipation of an unseen, future reality (cf. Heb 11:1) – what is called here: “***the city that is to come.***”
- By implication, the importance of the city of ***Jerusalem on earth***, which was symbolic of the temple and the levitical sacrifices, must ***give way*** to that of the ***heavenly Jerusalem.***
- But the readers will not be going to the ***heavenly Jerusalem*** if they return to the Judaism of the ***earthly Jerusalem*** (cf. Heb 13:10).

¹⁵ Through him then **let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such **sacrifices** are pleasing to God.

- As the promise of an unshakable kingdom led to a call to worship that is acceptable to God (Heb 12:28), so the prospect of life in God's everlasting city leads to a call for us to offer "*sacrifices*" that please him.
- Jesus has already offered himself as the **final, complete sacrifice** to atone for sins, so no further sin offering is needed (Heb 10:14, 18, 26).
- But believers cleansed by his death now enjoy the priestly privilege of bringing offerings that express their thanksgiving and consecration.

¹⁵ *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.* ¹⁶ *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

- Though we are no longer to participate in the **Levitical** sacrifices, there **are** forms of “*sacrifice*” – spiritual, and not literal – that are still pleasing to God.
- The first one he mentions, utilizing OT language, is “*a sacrifice of praise*”.
- This expression is used a few times in the OT to indicate a particular category of literal sacrifice (e.g., 2 Chron 29:31 – in the Septuagint), but it also was used as a **figure of speech** for a **grateful heart** (e.g., Ps 50:14, 23).

¹⁵ ***Through him*** then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, ***the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*** ¹⁶ Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

- This continual sacrifice is to be made “*through him*” (Jesus), and it is further defined as “*the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*”
- Barclay’s translation is appropriate: “*which publicly affirm their faith in him.*”
- In the case of the original readers, the “*sacrifice of praise*” would be remaining faithful to their Christian confession.
- Only in this way could they show their thankfulness to God for what he has done.

¹⁵ *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.* ¹⁶ *Do not neglect **to do good and to share what you have**, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

- There are, however, **other** sacrifices with which God is pleased, the spiritual counterpart of the sacrifices of the old covenant.
- These include actions such as “*to do good*” and “*to share*” with others.
- The readers are not to forget these common Christian virtues.
- This, and not through the sacrifice of animals (cf. Heb 9:8ff.), is the way that faithfulness to God is to be manifested in the new covenant.

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- The readers were encouraged to look at men who had served as leaders in the church and to *imitate*:
 - Their faithfulness to accurately handle the Word of God
 - The way they lived out their faith
- Can you think of a believer who is no longer around, whose faith and life still serves as a good example for you?
- Would you be willing to describe this person to the class (even if we didn't know them) and tell us what it was about them that makes you want to imitate them?

*Class Discussion Time

- The readers were encouraged to join Jesus “*outside the camp*,” that is, they are called to leave behind the security and comfort of Judaism and in so doing to “*bear the reproach*” he bore (RSV: “bear the abuse he endured,” cf. Heb 12:2).
- What do you think joining Jesus “*outside the camp*” might look like in our day?

*Class Discussion Time

- In the case of the original readers, the “*sacrifice of praise*” that the author exhorted them to have was their faithfulness to their Christian confession.
- It was only in this way that they could truly show their thankfulness to God for what he has done.
- What might be an example of a “*sacrifice of praise*” in our day?

*Class Discussion Time

- In our text today we saw ***other*** sacrifices with which God is pleased – the spiritual counterpart of the sacrifices required in the old covenant.
- These included: actions such as “*to do good*” and “*to share*” with others.
- Can you think of some specific examples of “doing good” and/or “sharing with others” that you have seen Christians engaging in within the local church?