

Studies in Hebrews



Lesson XXIV

Text: Chapter 13:8-25 (NLT)

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹ So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas. Your strength comes from God's grace, not from rules about food, which don't help those who follow them.

¹⁰ We have an altar from which the priests in the Tabernacle have no right to eat. ¹¹ Under the old system, the high priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, and the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. ¹² So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates to make his people holy by means of his own blood. ¹³ So let us go out to him, outside the camp, and bear the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴ For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.

¹⁵ Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. ¹⁶ And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.

¹⁷ Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit. ¹⁸ Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live honorably in everything we do. ¹⁹ And especially pray that I will be able to come back to you soon.

²⁰ Now may the God of peace—who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood—²¹ may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen. ²² I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, to pay attention to what I have written in this brief exhortation. ²³ I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released from jail. If he comes here soon, I will bring him with me to see you. ²⁴ Greet all your leaders and all the believers there. The believers from Italy send you their greetings. ²⁵ May God's grace be with you all.

Questions for Group Discussions

1. If Jesus never changes (vs. 8), why do you think people are still “attracted by strange, new ideas” (vs. 9—“diverse and strange doctrines,” KJV)?
2. Who are the “priests of the Tabernacle” in verse 10 and why don’t they have the right “to eat” from our “altar”? What is the writer of Hebrews trying to get across in verses 11-16 by contrasting “the old system” (in which animal sacrifices were burned “outside the camp”) with Jesus the Christ (who “suffered and died outside the city gates”)?
3. What do verses 17-19 teach us about the importance of supporting the leadership of our congregation? Practically speaking, how can each of us do this? (cf. vv 18-19)
4. Identify the key points of the benediction of verses 20-21 and the final exhortation of verses 22-25. What foundational principles and core values can you find related to the church of Christ?