

"Without The Gate ..."

"For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach ..." (Heb. 13:11-13).

As the writer has earlier referred to the original tabernacle in the wilderness in his contrast between the law of Christ and the system given by Moses, so he continues that contrast with Israel's original redemptive system. Three times the word "without" is found: twice it is "without the camp;" once it is "without the gate." The reference is to the day of atonement when two goats were taken. Lots were cast between them. Upon the head of one was "confessed the sins" of Israel and it was led out into the wilderness where it was turned loose to "bear away the sins" of Israel. This one was styled the "scape goat." The second was slain at the altar; his blood was taken by the high priest who entered into the holy of holiest twice that day. First the priest offered atonement for himself, then with the blood of the slain goat, he entered a second time into the holiest of holies and offered that blood for the sins of the people. The body of that slain animal was taken without the camp of Israel and burned (Lev. 16:5-19; 27). When Jerusalem was chosen as the permanent site for worship and the tabernacle gave way to the temple, the symbolism was continued: the slain goat was carried outside Jerusalem's walls, as in the earliest days the goat was carried outside the camp: the tents and settlement of Israel.

Jesus fulfilled that symbolism perfectly. As the sacrificed goat's body was carried outside the camp -- the gates of Jerusalem to be burned, so Jesus' crucifixion was outside the city (Mt. 27:32). While the goat's blood was taken into the holiest place Jesus "entered not into the holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:24-26).

Now Christians are called to "go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." As Jesus was led away outside the gates of Jerusalem "there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of the women who bewailed and lamented him" (Lk. 23:27). To have been identified with Jesus was both dangerous and embarrassing. Peter's thrice denial of being a

disciple or even knowing Jesus was done out of momentary fear he would share the same fate as Jesus. Jesus' death as a common criminal opened him "to the mockery and scorn" of all and those who identified themselves with him was cast into similar reproach. It is as though the writer is saying, "Jesus is scorned and despised as Isaiah wrote 'He was despised and rejected of men.' Those who followed Him garnered the same reproach and scorn to themselves. Nevertheless, have the courage to identify yourself presently with Him, follow Him 'outside the camp' that the blessings of the eternal blood may be upon your soul."

Let us soberly remember that Paul wrote, "*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ...*" (Rom. 1:16). He wrote, "*For which cause I suffer these things, yet I am not ashamed ...*" (2 Tim. 1:12). He commanded young Timothy, "*Be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner*" (2 Tim. 1:8). Let us never forget Jesus' warning: "*Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father and with the holy angels*" (Mk. 8:38). Let it be that we can truly sing: "I'm not shamed to own my Lord, nor to defend His Cause, Maintain the honor of his word, the glory of his cross." He suffered "*without the gate.*" Let us, unashamedly, go to Him "*without the camp*" bearing his reproach.

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