

The Book of Hebrews – The Superiority of Christ

...God has spoken to us in His Son...(Hebrews 1:2)

Compelled to Go Out to Christ (Come to Christ)

Hebrews 13:10-14

10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

Why me? Have you ever asked that question? Why me? Sometimes it is asked when seemingly bad or difficult things come our way. The computer crashes – why me? A bad report from the doctor – why me? The flashing of police lights in the rear view mirror – why me? An unexpected or forgotten bill – why me? A friend who discourages you – why me?

Sometimes, but maybe not as frequently, the why me question may be asked because of something wonderful. A wife or husband, thinking about a spouse's love wonders, why me? Maybe you get an unexpected honor or raise at work and ask, why me? I remember about 10 years ago walking into a local copy shop to have some flyers for the youth group made up. As I placed the order, I was asked to fill out an entry form for a TV the shop was giving away that day. Before I left, the drawing held and I won that little 13 inch color TV and remember thinking, why me?

Yes, there are a lot of reasons why we might ask such a question and perhaps the greatest one is with reference to salvation in Jesus Christ. For what believer is there, who giving careful consideration of the grace of God in granting him or her salvation, has not asked the question, "why me?" Why has our Father who is in heaven, determined to show His love and apply the merits and achievements of the blood of Jesus to my account? Do you ever wonder, "why me?"

And recently, as I have been asking myself this question of "why me?" in reference to salvation, I have been praying for the salvation of others and often find myself asking the Lord, "why not them?" I know that many of us have those for whom we have been praying for long and hard that the reality of their need for Jesus might be known to them and that the transforming power of Jesus that causes the heart to be devoted to Him might be realized. And at same time we might wonder "why not them, Lord?" We know that salvation is from the Lord. We know that it is God who draws people by His Spirit to the reality and Lordship of Jesus Christ.

And yet we also know that God has called those whom He has already saved to be His witnesses – to tell people the outrageous news that God sent His Son to the earth – the God-man; one who performed miracles, walking on water, healing the sick and even raising the dead. I mean, come on, even with that much, most people would at best thing you are simplistically quaint for believing something like that and of course there are other who would simply regard you as imbecilic for holding such a faith. But then to add to the story that there is an offended God, offended at our willful rebellion and apathy toward Him who created us and that this offence is punishable by death; a death that Jesus bore on the cross, a death that buried Jesus in a tomb for three days and yet – here is not only the crux of Christianity, but

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also the stumbling block for the unbelieving world, that on the third day, Jesus rose again from the dead confirming all that He said to be true – one such truth being that unless you are born again you cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3); and another such truth being, **“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23).** Do you believe that? Let me put it another way – does your manner of living; does your behavior; does your speech reflect that Jesus has risen from the dead?

And if you answer, “Yes, I believe. My life has been so changed” – do you ever wonder why it is that God has been so gracious to let you understand these truths while friends, family members, neighbors or co-workers with whom you have shared these truths, who know these truths mentally have not come to embrace them by faith? Why have some who have heard so much not yet come to Jesus? Again, let me say I am well aware that it is an issue of God’s sovereignty. As Romans 9:18, **“...[God] has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.”** And yet, as I have already noted, in God’s sovereignty, He has called those who trust in His provision for salvation to “make disciples” – to make learners of Jesus Christ by teaching them to obey all that He commanded according to Matthew 28:19-20. In the parable of the great dinner of Luke 14:16-23, our Lord Jesus gives insight as to the responsibility of those who are in His service:

But [Jesus] said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; 17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ 19 Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’ 20 Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’ 21 And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ 22 And the slave said, ‘Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ 23 And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.”

Do you see the charge to those who serve Jesus? We are called to “compel them to come in.” We are to communicate the greatness of the provision of God – great is the banquet, marvelous is the setting, joyful the ambiance. Do we compel them to come? In 2 Corinthians 5:11, with reference to the coming judgment of God, the Apostle Paul says, **“we persuade men”** – that we seek to convince and make men believe the truth about Jesus. Let me make myself clear. The Scriptures make us responsible for rightly and persuasively communicating the truth – of calling and compelling people to come to Jesus. The Scriptures do not make us responsible for their response to that truth; for their response is a matter of their hearts in conjunction of the working of the Spirit of God. This is why we pray for the Lord to open the hearts of unbelievers. He is sovereign in salvation.

Now, with this rather long introduction it may be a wonder what all this has to do with Hebrews 13:10-14. In this passage we see the author calling, compelling, seeking to persuade his readers to come all the way to Jesus. Do not forget that this book was written first to a

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predominately if not exclusively Jewish audience. And the author, being a Jew, has been relentlessly and exhaustively been putting forth one convincing truth after another for the unbelieving and uncommitted Jew to come all the way to Jesus – to forsake that God-inspired yet man-corrupted religion of Judaism; that system of belief as outlined in the Old Testament, meant not to be man's answer to peace with God, but meant to point men to God's answer as found in Messiah – a system that had been perverted into a man-centered; man-accomplished religion. Rather than the law and its shadows and symbolisms, **“consider Jesus”** says Hebrews 3:1 – look at Jesus, how much better He is over everything the Jews esteem; over the angels, over Moses, over Joshua, over the Priesthood, and over the law. Have faith in Him whom you have not seen but of whom all the true saints of all time have looked to. And now, here in our text, is yet another appeal, another plea, another call to these yet unconvinced readers – the author has not given up – he is determined to pour out the truth concerning Jesus and as we will note more carefully in verse 13, he will seek to compel them once more saying, **“Let us go out to Him!”** In effect, “Would you please come with me to Jesus?” I have told you the truth about Him – I have marveled before you at His grace and mercy? I have often wondered myself, “why me?” – but now I say to you, “Why not you?” Why would you not come with me to Jesus?” Oh to have such a burden, such a burning desire to plead with unbelievers to come all the way to Jesus – of being made right with God; not by the law of Moses, but rather by the grace of Jesus.

Our text may be neatly divided into three sections:

- I. The greatest sacrifice of the Law (13:10-11)
- II. The greatest sacrifice of Christ (13:12)
- III. The greatest sacrifice of the true believer (13:13-14)

I. The Greatest Sacrifice of the Law (13:10-11)

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

In verses 10-11 the author draws the readers' attention to the greatest and finest sacrifice of the law – the sacrifice given on the day of Atonement, that once-a-year sacrifice that was offered in faith, in the hope that God would grant the people of Israel another year's reprieve as they awaited the long expected Messiah.

Our text begins with the author saying **“we have an altar”** – a phrase that has confused many people. Is the “we” referring to Christians here? I think not. I believe the author has done here what he has been doing throughout the book, often linking himself as a Jew with other Jews who are looking at the merits of Jesus. So, when we read, **“we have an altar which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat...”** he is speaking of the Jewish people and their religion. The Jews had an altar and theirs was the tabernacle or temple at which sacrifices to be made right with God could be made. And, from verse 11 we see that a very specific sacrifice is being referred to, the sacrifice offered on the day of Atonement.

What is important for us to note is that there were sacrifices described in Leviticus in which the priests, the priests and their families or the priest and the sacrificer's family could eat. When certain peace offerings were offered up, the priest would eat a portion of it with the

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offering family to symbolize God's acceptance and fellowship. But of the offering given on the day of Atonement, God's Word was clear – no one was to eat of it. What was not offered up on the altar was to be taken outside the camp and burned with fire.

Why was it that no one was to eat of this sacrifice? From a reading of Leviticus 16 we learn that the lamb sacrificed was a "sin" offering. It pictured the penalty and removal of sin as being death. As the lamb was offered, the picture is of the sins of the people being put to death. And then, as the remains of that lamb were removed from the camp, taken outside the camp and burned up, the picture is the removal of sin from the camp and of being now set apart from sin in order to rightly worship and serve God. There is to be no fellowship with sin or that tainted by sin – so the remains were burned.

Now then, this was the highest and greatest sacrifice the Law could offer the Jew – a temporary reprieve from the judgment of sin. It was never meant to satisfy God or His people as they were to anticipate a greater and final sacrifice. This is exactly what the author spoke of in Hebrews 10:1-4 saying,

1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

The Law was only a shadow of the good things to come. That is what we glean again from Hebrews 13:10-11 – the Law provided a temporary reprieve from the penalty of sin, but not eternal reconciliation with God. The Law could only foreshadow something better, but not provide eternal fellowship with God. Something greater was needed and this leads us to the next verse and our second point.

II. The Greatest Sacrifice of Christ (13:12)

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Here in verse 12 we see that the sacrifice of Jesus is likened unto the greatest sacrifice of the Law – the sacrifice offered on the day of Atonement. Now, it must be remembered that the author here is using the Old Testament sacrifice as a picture to prove his point. The point being that the sacrifices never truly atoned for sin and never truly empowered the people to be separated from sin. It is only the blood of Jesus Christ that truly cleanses from all sin according to 1 John 1:7.

Hebrews 13:12 tells us that Jesus ***"suffered outside the gate."*** This is a clear reference to the fact that Jesus was disgracefully crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem – a place we know as Calvary. But there is an important point here – and that is this – the death that Jesus died was shameful. He was disgraced. He was humiliated and treated like a common criminal. That Jesus was taken outside the city pictured the people's rejection of Him. The Jewish leaders thought that they were removing sin from within the center of worship by taking Jesus to the cross. What they didn't realize is that by doing so, Jesus was

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actually removing not only sin, but also the demands of the law by perfectly fulfilling it. It has been noted that by the death of Jesus outside of the center of Jewish worship, that is the temple, Jesus was clearly making His sacrifice universal, that is for all kinds of people, Jews and Gentiles. For ultimately His sacrifice was not made in that man-made temple, but it was made outside – for all to see – for all to behold – for all to know.

But what makes the sacrifice of Jesus different? What makes it better? Notice verse 12 tells us that Jesus suffered outside the gate, **“that He might sanctify the people through His own blood...”** When we see that word “sanctify” we generally associate it with “being made holy” or being “set apart” – all of which is true. But in the context of our verses we are being told that the blood of Jesus Christ actually sets apart or separates the believer not only from sin, as Jesus is clearly the greatest sin offering; but – and notice this, He also is separating the people from the known place of worship – the temple. There is a subtle but clear picture that Jesus, by suffering outside the gate, is declaring temple worship finished, done, complete. Judaism is over – Christianity has come (Hebrews 9:6-14). This brings us then to our third point.

III. The Greatest Sacrifice of the True Believer (13:13-14)

13 So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

The author of Hebrews is now ready to compel his readers once again, calling them to action; calling them to make a decision. Having reminded them of the limitations and inadequacies of the Old Testament sacrifices and of the superlative nature of the sacrifice of Jesus; and having declared to them the end of the law in Jesus, of the truth of Jesus and of faith in Jesus; we have the burdened preacher now say, **“So, let us go out to Him...”** In other words, let us be done with that which is failing and fading. Leave the rituals and ceremonies of man-made religion that does not bring us to God. Come to Jesus. And coming to Jesus meant some rather difficult things for these first readers. They would have to go outside the camp. That is, they would have to leave Judaism. It is as if the author is saying here, “Do you want to come to God? Do you want to be right with God? Then you must come out of Judaism – you must come out of the camp and go to Jesus. Why?

- Because Jesus is the only way

John 14:6 - “I am the way...no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

- Because Jesus is the propitiation
(the once for all and only sacrifice that fully pays for a person’s sin and makes him right with God by faith).

1 John 2:1-2 – “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

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Romans 5:10-11 - 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

- Because Jesus is the veil
(even as the temple veil was torn in two symbolizing access to God for all who come by faith - Matthew 27:51; the true veil was the flesh of Jesus, which when broken on the cross, made access to God available to all by faith)

Hebrews 10:19-22 – 19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Beloved, we must get outside the camp and we must be going to Jesus. To get to Jesus means coming through the gate. It is a narrow gate and few find it. It is a narrow gate and we must strive to enter in. But while it is not found by all and it is agonizing to enter it, it is a path that other will see you take and many will mock and ridicule you for it. Notice our text says that by coming to Jesus outside the camp, we will be **“bearing His reproach.”** People didn’t like Jesus because they didn’t like His message, **“Repent [be separated from your sin], for the kingdom, the righteousness of God is at hand.”** Men love darkness and sin, not light and righteousness. Men love “morality” and the appearance of “civility” but they hate the cross and its indictment that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God – they cannot believe they are that bad.

When our text calls the readers to come outside the camp, it is a call, it is a *compelling to reject any religion, any manner of life that is not the manner of Christ*. What is the message of this compelling? “Let us, go outside to Jesus - to Jesus the Holy One, to Jesus our atonement and high priest, to Jesus the source of all grace. Let us get out of the old, obsolete shadow that is passing away and impotent to save, and let us go to Jesus, bearing proudly the shame of Jesus even as Moses did, **“considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of Egypt”** (Hebrews 11:26). Let us consider the reproach of the cross of Christ as of greater worth than all the treasures of this world.

Let us get out of the world, out of all cults, and out of all churches that refuse to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Let us go out to churches that preach the gospel of God’s grace, for what fellowship is there between light and darkness, between life and death? Jesus tells us to deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and follow him. He did not come to make us rich and famous, but to make us sons of glory, fit to live in the world to come.

Let us, then, get out of the City of Destruction even as did “Christian” and follow Jesus to the City of God. Let us join Abraham, Moses, Peter, Paul, Stephen, James, and all the holy martyrs in bearing the stigma of Christ proudly.

What does this world have to offer the true child of God? What does Hebrews 13:14 tell us, **“For here [on this earth] we do not have a lasting [a continuing; a satisfying] city,**

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but we are seeking the city which is to come.” We are, as the song declares, “Marching to Zion” - to the heavenly city of God. The author tells his first readers that the earthly Jerusalem cannot save them. And this either needs to be part of the message we compel others with or you simply need to be compelled with it right now. Nothing on this earth can save anyone. There is no abiding city here. The security of this world is just a mirage. This world is Sodom, about to be burned. Therefore, let us cry out with the Psalmist (Psalm 73:25-26):

25 Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail [as I perceive everything earthly around me], but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Jesus has called us out of earthly, sensual, man-made thinking and religion. I don't know what kind of religion you may be practicing today. Do not think that by religion I mean simply Islam or Roman Catholicism or some other formal system. I have found that most people have a religion of their own making. Let me identify just a few, perhaps you or someone you know practices such a religion and needs to be compelled to come out of that camp to come to Jesus. There is the religion of...

- **Familiarity** – to be close or comfortable with. A religion that is simply something you do because you grew up with it, but you have never thought about. You do it because Mom and Dad did it. You do it because it is what is expected.

Matthew 10:37-39

37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

- **Convenience** – for some, their practice of religion is nothing more than the fact it suits them. They love the ability to come to Jesus when they want to, if they want to. For them the cry is constantly “Christian liberty” rather than faithful responsibility. Inwardly they despise the idea of being a “slave to Christ” saying with the Pharisees, “we...have never been enslaved to anyone...” all the while being enslaved to sin. Let us not forget that Luke 13:24 that says,

Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

- **Pride** – the religion that is more concerned about what I do or do not do rather than what Christ did for me – the sinner.

Galatians 6:14

But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

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- **Respect** – practicing those things that make you look “good” and “right” in the eyes of others. Yet often following the Lord runs counter to such – making us look like simpletons or fools.

1 Corinthians 4:9-13

9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. 11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; 12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; 13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

- **Pleasure** – the religion of doing those things that please you – that the flesh enjoys. The things themselves may not even be “unlawful” but the priority they have in our lives and our constant pursuit of them indicates we are worshipping the wrong thing.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

1 Peter 4:3

For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

What religion has you firmly held in its grasp? What thinking has kept you from a right worship of God? What are you holding on to that keeps you from coming all the way to Jesus? Have you been compelled to come? I was reading Acts 28:23-24 the other day and I think it serves well to close with here. Paul was preaching the gospel to a large crowd. I would have you notice here what this preacher of the sovereignty of God did, something that each of us who profess Christ ought to imitate – we must be compelling people to come to Jesus.

Acts 28:23-24

23 When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. 24 Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

If you are a believer this morning, then let me ask you – how are you compelling and persuading people concerning Jesus? Some will be persuaded – other will not, but let us pray for all saying, “Why not them, Lord?” And if you are not a believer or are uncertain about your

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relationship with Christ – will you not be persuaded to come? The question is a matter of life and death. Do you have full assurance that if you walk out those doors in a few moments and death finds you that you will stand before God fully justified in Jesus or is there a concern that you will stand condemned as a well-meaning but foolish sinner who never went out to Jesus?

Let us go out to Jesus for only He can take us the abiding city, the unshakable kingdom of God. Let us seek earnestly the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you (Matthew 6:33). Let us go out to the highways and byways and bid them, compel them to come in. Let us praise God for the greatest sacrifice of Christ and know that the greatest sacrifice of the believer is trading in the filth of this world for the riches of Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria

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