

# “Go forth therefore unto Him without the camp”

Hebrews 13:13

The Hebrew believers were asked to make a most costly choice. It's called “*without the camp*”. The camp in OT language was the center of Jewish religious life. It's where the tabernacle-temple was with God's presence centered among the tents of His people. So being outside the camp was usually not a positive thing. However, if “the camp” became corrupted, they then were to separate from their corrupted religious heritage to stay true to God – even though shame and unpopularity would be waiting for them outside.

At the time of Christ, the Jewish religion (camp) was out of God's ways in Christ the Son. They had ritualistic sacrifices, clergy priesthood, holy days of worship, moral ethics, family values and Moses as their law authority. However, they crucified the One Moses wrote about, Christ (Messiah) Jesus. Thus the Jewish camp of that day disbelieved the gospel of God's Son in His redeeming sacrifice, resurrection as high priest, and risen authority as Lord. (Philp. 2:6-11, Acts 2:36, Rom. 10:9, Col. 3:17. Heb. 1:3). His gospel of saving grace was spurned for their religious law keeping.

So for a believer to be faithful unto God, he had to go by faith unto the Lord Jesus Christ. But the Lord Jesus was not in the religious temple in Jerusalem. He was in heaven on God's right hand – outside the camp. For the camp did not enthrone Him in the holy city, but crucified Jesus *outside* the city gates in a place of execution and shame for criminals. But God raised Him from the dead. Thus going forth to God now involved separation.

A Jewish believer in Messiah Jesus would know all too well what being “*without the camp*” meant. Following is a list of things that were to be outside the camp.

1. **The Sin Offering** – *burning of flesh and its dung – sin and its stench*  
(Ex. 29:14 / Lev. 4:12)
2. **The Ashes of Death** – *where the ashes from the burnt offering would be taken*  
(Lev. 6:11)
3. **The Dishonorable Dead** – *where those who died under God's judgment were disposed*  
(Lev. 10:4-5)
4. **The Leper** – *where the diseased unclean lived in an isolated and quarantined state*  
(Lev. 13:46 / Num. 12:15)
5. **The Lawbreaker** – *where the blasphemer and sinner were executed and removed from society*  
(Lev. 24:14-16 / Num. 15:36)

6. **The Defiled and Unclean** – *contamination – where the removal of those who could endanger others were sent* (Num. 5:1:4)
7. **The Slayed Red Heifer** – *where the solution for uncleanness had to be killed and totally burnt* (Num. 19:3,9)
8. **The Gentile Captives** – *where strangers (foreigners) were judged: either executed or spared - but not with full privilege* (Num. 31:13-20 / Josh. 6:23)
9. **Human Dung** – *where the garbage-filth was buried. Because God is holy there is no human filth permitted in His camp* (Deut. 23:12-14)
10. **The Enemies of God** – *war: where Gideon saw the Midianites destroyed* (Judges 7:17-19)
11. **The Separated from the Corrupt Religious Mainstream** – *where one would have to go in unpopularity to be apart from the popular* (Ex. 33:7)
12. **Jesus** – *capital punishment outside the city walls where criminals were crucified and removed from society as unfit* (Hebrews 13:12)
13. **The Faithful Christian** – *where believers are exhorted to identify in shame and reproach with their rejected Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ* (Heb. 13:13)

It is interesting that the first and last mention in Scripture of being outside the camp has to do with meeting with God. The first mention is in Exodus 19:17 where Moses brought the people “*out of the camp to meet with God*”. The last mention is in our text from Hebrews 13:13 where Christians are to go by faith “*unto Him without the camp*”. This is to meet with the Lord Jesus, who though rejected on earth is now glorified in heaven.

The believers were reminded that the Lord Jesus is not identified with any one city on earth as the holy headquarters of their faith. It was no longer Jerusalem for it had rejected God’s Son. Nor would it be Mecca or London or Vatican City in Rome or Varanasi or Bodhgaya or Plymouth or Nashville or Ottawa or Salt Lake City or Washington. They were told, “*here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come*”, Heb. 13:14.

So what now? Through Christ Jesus we offer the sacrifices of praise and doing good to God, who called us by His grace into this blessed minority, Heb. 13:15-16. We now suffer outside the camp but will glory later at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Whether we meet in a cave or building, we don’t have an authoritative city on earth but a Person in heaven.

*...Come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant ... .*

*Heb. 12:22-24*